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JOE PHENIX'S SHADOW

OR,

The Great Detective's
Mysterious Monitor.

A Romance of the Seen and Unseen.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

AUTHOR OF "JOE PHENIX, THE POLICE SPY,"
"THE WOLVES OF NEW YORK," "THE
BAT OF THE BATTERY," "LA
MARMOSET," "THE ACTOR
DETECTIVE," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE DARK DEED IN THE SQUARE.

IT wanted five minutes of nine o'clock; the night was a dark one, for there was no moon and not a star was there with strength enough to peep through the heavy blanket of clouds which covered the face of the sky.

To the west of Broadway, New York City's great street, lies the small pleasure-ground known as Washington Square, and on this night

"IF YOU DECIDE TO CONFESS BEFORE THE RATS DEVOUR YOU, CALL OUT, FOR I WILL BE WITHIN HEARING!" PHENIX SAID.

owing to the trouble between the city authorities and the companies furnishing the electric wires, which had resulted in the almost complete extinguishing of the electric lights, the Park was but dimly illuminated.

But no one hesitated to cross it, on this account; it was only a few blocks long and wide, and an average walker could easily traverse it inside of five minutes, and though shrouded in gloom, here and there, what danger was to be apprehended?

True, tramps occasionally intruded, but there were the park police—the "Sparrows," as the local wits term them on account of their gray coats—whose duty it was to see that the idlers in the Square behaved themselves and did not utilize the benches as beds.

It is the pleasing practice of park policemen to play the "devil's tattoo" with their clubs on the feet-soles of the unfortunate wretches who may so far forget the respect due to the laws of the great metropolis as to go to sleep within the sacred precincts of any of the city parks.

Maginnis, No. 840, was patrolling his beat across the Park, swinging his club after the fashion common to the guardians of the peace, when he caught sight of the figure of a man, reclining on a bench.

It was rather a dark spot, owing to the absence of the electric light, and the policeman conjectured that the man had thought he could enjoy a nap undisturbed.

The Irishman took a firmer grip on his club and, with a grin on his swarthy face, stole cautiously up and hit the man a sounding rap on the soles of one of his feet.

"Wake up an' pay for yer bed!" cried the policeman as he struck the blow.

The man promptly responded to the salutation by rolling off the bench to the ground, and there he lay, face upward, white and ghastly in the faint light.

The man was dead!

Maginnis stared in horror.

"Wow, wow! what is the meaning of this?" he cried, and then he promptly gave the alarm raps for assistance.

His comrades came hurrying to the scene.

They knelt by the side of the body; it was yet warm.

He was no tramp, but a nicely-dressed gentleman, evidently a Hebrew, a man well in years, with a long gray beard.

"Mebbe he isn't dead, after all, but only in a swoon," Maginnis suggested. "An' a docther will fetch him to his sineses!"

"I'm afraid that he is a goner," one of the others remarked.

The regular police were summoned, an ambulance call was sent on its way, and the man, living or dead, was soon on his way to the hospital.

The doctor in charge of the ambulance proceeded to make an examination as soon as the vehicle got under way.

"The man is dead, sure enough," the official remarked to his companion. "His heart has ceased to beat."

And as he spoke he drew his hand from the breast of the dead man.

A ray of light from a brilliantly-illuminated saloon came into the ambulance.

His companion uttered a cry of alarm.

"Great heavens, Charley! your hand is covered with blood!"

It was the truth, and these experienced men at once suspected that there had been foul play.

And so there had, as an examination speedily disclosed, when the body was placed upon the operating-table and the breast laid bare,

The man had been stabbed to the heart with some sharp instrument, apparently not much bigger round than a knitting-needle.

None of the old and experienced surgeons, who surrounded the table, had ever seen such a wound before.

The steel had been driven home with a firm and determined hand, and it looked as if the assassin knew exactly where to strike, for the heart was pierced through and through.

Just as the examination was completed, and the doctors came to the conclusion that a message should at once be sent to Police Headquarters in regard to this strange case, the superintendent of police, accompanied by the well-known detective officer, the renowned Joe Phenix, entered the building.

They had come to interview a wounded burglar who had been entrapped by Phenix, but whose comrades had succeeded in escaping.

This man, instead of taking to his heels when surprised by the vigilant detective, was fool enough to imagine that he could "down" the bloodhound, and the result of the struggle with the lion-like detective sent him to the hospital with a wound which would be likely to cripple him for life.

The superintendent was immediately notified of what had taken place, and, in company with the detective, came to the operating-room.

No sooner had Joe Phenix cast eyes on the dead man than he recognized him.

"It is Abraham Rosengelt, the diamond-broker, whose place of business is on Broadway, near Bleecker street, unless I am deceived by some strange resemblance," he said. "I have

not seen the old Jew for some years," he continued, "but he has not changed materially, and I feel positive that it is he."

"Has any examination been made of his clothes?" the police chief asked.

"Not yet," was the answer.

"We will do it then at once," said the superintendent.

Ample proof was soon found that the murdered man was the Jew diamond-broker, for his business cards, and letters addressed to him, were in his pockets.

His wallet, with some forty odd dollars in it was untouched, and on his little finger he wore a diamond ring, worth probably a hundred odd dollars, and his watch and chain, both valuable, had not been taken.

"Well, this doesn't look as if the man had been killed so that he might be robbed," the chief remarked.

"No, unless the approach of the policeman frightened the assassin away before he had a chance to plunder his victim," Joe Phenix suggested.

"But I do not think that is probable, for if Rosengelt had been assaulted for the purpose of robbery, the man who worked the job would never have stabbed him to the heart after this fashion."

"That is true; a sand-club, or some such weapon would have been used," the chief observed. "There was no reason for killing the man. If he had been stunned, the rascals could have got away with his valuables without any trouble."

"It seems more like a case of private vengeance," the detective observed, slowly. "The man was stabbed with a peculiar weapon, one evidently after the fashion of an Italian stiletto, but, in all my experience with daggers, I never came across a tool as small as this one must have been."

"It could not have been much bigger round than a knitting-needle, and I should imagine that it was not over six inches long," said the surgeon-in-chief, who had superintended the examination. "Another point which may be of interest to you, and that is—whoever dealt the blow knew exactly where to strike, for the heart is pierced precisely in the center, which would seem to imply a directing hand used to the anatomy of the human body—a medical student, or one who had studied the subject as a student would study it."

"It certainly has the appearance of an act of private vengeance," the superintendent decided, thoughtfully. "And from the nature of the weapon, I should say it was the work of a foreigner; it looks like a bit of Italian business."

"Yes, it does; the stiletto is the favorite weapon of those hot-headed children of the South," Joe Phenix coincided.

"Do you know anything about the character of this diamond-broker?" the police chief asked. "Did he do any business with Italians—was he at all inclined to be crooked, using the diamond-broker business as a cloak?"

"I do not think so," Phenix replied. "About three years ago I came in intimate contact with him, being employed in a diamond case, and as the jewels which were stolen came from him, I had to go to the old man for information, which he gave with the utmost readiness. It is my impression that he was perfectly square and above board in all his dealings."

"That makes the case still more mysterious," the superintendent commented. "If he was a 'fence,' and made his money by buying stolen goods, then it would be easy to account for this assassination. He drove a hard bargain with some rascal, and the fellow, in revenge, put the steel into him."

"Well, of course it is possible the man may have been crooked, but to the best of my judgment he was not," the detective added.

"We will go at the case as soon as we get through this little business here," the chief said. "I will put the boys at Headquarters on the scent, and I should not be surprised if you could make an arrangement with the old Jew's family, if you care to try what you can do with the matter."

Joe Phenix was not now one of the city detective force, but ran an independent detective bureau.

"Yes, I will see them. I fancy there will be work for all of us, for it seems to be about as dark a case as I have ever seen."

An hour later every detective in the city was on the scent.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT WAS THE MOTIVE?

THE police chief and the detective had come to the hospital to interview the wounded burglar, with the idea of getting some information out of him in regard to his companions, but they found they had a tough customer to deal with, and were obliged to go away no wiser than when they came.

"Well, we have had our trouble for our pains," the superintendent observed to Joe Phenix, as the pair descended the steps of the hospital on their way to the *coupe*, which was in waiting at the door.

"Yes, the fellow is not inclined to peach on

his companions, but he may change his mind when he finds that he is being fairly started on the road to Sing Sing."

"I don't admire engaging in a quest without accomplishing something," the superintendent remarked. "It is like a man going fishing, and coming back empty-handed, and, as we have not been able to do anything in this case, suppose we drive to Washington Square and see what particulars we can learn there in regard to this mysterious murder."

"It would be a good idea, I think," Joe Phenix assented.

So the two were driven to the scene of the tragedy.

Of course the park police were glad to do all in their power for so great a man as the superintendent.

Little information, though, did he gain.

None of the "Sparrows" had noticed any suspicious person in the Park. Not even a solitary tramp had wandered in there during the evening, and when this was announced, Joe Phenix said, in his quiet way, that no tramp had done this bloody deed.

It was ascertained that few persons had crossed the Park about the time the murder must have been committed; hence it was not a wonder no one had been in the neighborhood when the blow was struck.

"Ride with me to Headquarters, and we will talk this matter over," said the superintendent, as he and Joe Phenix quitted the Square.

After they were in the carriage, the police chief began the conversation.

"This is one of those mysterious crimes which are such a puzzle," he remarked.

"Yes, the chances are a thousand to one that no one saw the deed committed."

"And we must go on 'theory.'"

"Yes, that is true."

"Now, we will imagine the old Jew entering the Park—he is crossing it—for what purpose?"

"That is to be discovered."

"Of course, a man of his style did not go there for a walk at nine o'clock at night."

"No, not likely."

"Did he go there to meet some one?"

"It looks like it."

"If he did not go to the Park to meet some one, but was merely crossing it, how would it be possible for any stranger to accost him and cause him to halt so that the blow could be struck?"

"It would be a difficult thing for any stranger to do," the detective decided, after thinking over the matter for a moment. "The diamond broker was no countryman—no simple old man, unused to the tricks and traps, and the crimes of a great city, but an unusually shrewd and sharp business man. If he had been accosted by a stranger, he would have been on his guard at once."

"My idea, exactly!" the superintendent declared. "So we may set it down for an absolute fact that no stranger to him struck the blow."

"Yes, that is point number one, and point number two seems to be that the murder was not committed by a common criminal for the purpose of securing booty, or else the watch, chain, diamond ring and pocketbook would have been taken."

"Yes, unless the approach of the officer frightened the man away before he had a chance to get at the swag."

"According to the policeman's statement, I should judge that he did not reach the spot where the murder was committed until from five to ten minutes after the blow was struck."

"He stated that the body was still warm when he discovered it."

"It would take considerably more than ten minutes for the animal heat to escape."

"True!"

"And after the blow was struck an expert crook would have secured the plunder in a very few seconds, and a minute more would have taken him well away from the spot."

"Correct! From these facts you deduce: first, no stranger; second, no robber; third, no chance meeting."

"Yes, and then we come to the motive—revenge?"

"It certainly looks like it now."

"Man or woman?"

"Man, I should say," the chief replied, immediately. "Few women would have the skill and strength to strike such a blow."

"It may be that when we speak of revenge we are on a false scent," Joe Phenix suggested. "You know that since the world was young, about the first thing the experienced detective seeks, when put on a murder case, is to discover who would profit most by the untimely taking off of the victim."

"Our minds run in the same groove, Phenix," the police chief said. "I was just about to speak of that. It is an old idea, and is often correct. How was the old man fixed? Have you any idea?"

"It is my impression that he was a very wealthy man," the detective replied. "He has been in business at the same place for thirty or forty years. I am pretty sure he owned the building. He rented out the store on the first

floor; the second he occupied for his business, and lived with his family on the third. A careful, prudent man, I should judge, who did a large trade, in which the profits were great, and yet he lived as economically as a clerk on a thousand a year."

"What family?"

"A son and daughter; both of whom assisted him in the business, for he kept no clerks, and it is my impression the daughter, who is a really beautiful girl, did all the housework without the assistance of a servant."

"The three lived alone in the house?"

"Yes, and although the old man always had a large and valuable stock on hand, yet, as he told me, he had no fear of being robbed, for his safes were splendid affairs, all of the latest pattern, and the house was protected by the most complete system of burglar alarms I have ever seen. In addition, he kept three small dogs, Scotch terriers, which, at night, were on guard in different parts of the house, and any attempt to force an entry into the premises would at once have roused the vigilance of these alert sentinels."

"By Jove! the old fellow knew what he was about!" the superintendent exclaimed. "Some of these cracksmen are smart, but I think these precautions would have bothered them."

"When the old man explained to me how well he was guarded, I said, in a joking way, that, if I was a burglar, and wanted to break into his premises, the first thing I would do would be to poison his dogs. He laughed and replied, 'You would not find that to be an easy job, my friend, for the brutes never go out on the street, and during the day they are confined in a shed in the yard, securely locked, and when they come out for a run in the yard, either my daughter, my son, or myself, are always with them, so that it would not be possible for any one to give them anything to eat; but then in case of some cunning trick, by means of which the dogs could be got at, the moment the brutes become sick I should suspect foul-play, and would send immediately for three more dogs, which I have, to replace them; I should, too, give warning to the police that I expected an attack and would thus be secretly prepared to give the rascals a warm reception."

"Egad! the old broker had a level head on his shoulders!" the police chief asserted. "No High Toby men could have cracked his crib! How strange, too, that such a man could have fallen beneath the steel of an assassin!"

"Yes, he was about the last person in the world whom I would have supposed could be taken by surprise."

"The son and daughter, I presume, will inherit his property," the superintendent remarked.

"Undoubtedly."

"According to the present showing, they will profit more by the man's death than anybody else, then?"

"It looks that way."

"How about the son—is he the kind of man who would stoop to a crime of this sort, do you think?"

"The impression I formed of him was extremely favorable. He is a slight, rather delicate-looking fellow, very quiet, and, seemingly, very much of a gentleman."

"Still waters run deep, you know."

"Yes, and I do not set myself up as a prophet!" Joe Phenix declared. "True, I think I can see as far into a millstone as the next man, but I would not attempt, on the slight acquaintance I have with this young man, to positively state that he is all he appears to be on the surface."

"That is where you are wise; too many good men go wrong nowadays for even the best judge of human nature to declare that he is positive about anybody," the superintendent rejoined. "But the way the case stands now, the son and daughter certainly will gain more by the old man's death than anybody else, and it seems to me the first move in the case is to see if the son and daughter did not have something to do with it."

"That would seemingly bring a hired assassin into the affair, for it is hardly credible that either of the children could have struck the blow."

"Very true, and if a tool was employed, the chances are that we will get at him, for he will be apt to have pals. Then, too, blood-money will have to be paid, and men of that kind generally stick to their employer like a leech."

"Yes, if a hired assassin committed the deed, the chances are good that, in time, he will be discovered," Joe Phenix said, in a thoughtful way, as if he was pondering over the affair.

Their arrival at Headquarters put an end to the conversation.

Joe Phenix entered with the chief, and waited until the detectives were put upon the trail, and then withdrew.

"The chief is on a false scent, I think," he murmured to himself.

CHAPTER III.

THE JEWISH LAW.

To say that the metropolis was astounded by

this mysterious crime would be to put the matter mildly.

The murder was committed at such an early hour that the morning journals were able to publish a full account of the affair, and, after the fashion now common to the enterprising reporters, they interviewed everybody who was in the remotest degree connected with the matter, the sparrow policeman, Maginnis, who discovered the body—and by the time he had told the tale to the tenth reporter, the Irishman began to consider himself to be a very important man indeed; his associates, who were called to the spot by the alarm; the detectives employed on the case, and the superintendent of police in person. But the police chief and the detectives were non-committal, so the reporters stated, although what on earth they could have to say, considering that they were without a single clew to the doer of the deed, is not plain.

The house of the dead man was fairly overrun, and the son and daughter roused from their grief to answer a lot of questions, asked so that the scribes might be able to write a "telling" account of the tragedy.

Columns were published in regard to the affair, yet all could have been summed up in a single paragraph:

Abraham Rosengelt had been stabbed to the heart in Washington Square; there was apparently no motive for the dead, and not the slightest clew to the murderer.

Joe Phenix had rooms in one of the large office buildings on lower Broadway in the neighborhood of Wall street, the great money center.

Since the detective had set up for himself he had done considerable work for the Wall street men, and possessed the confidence of the best bankers and brokers.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon; the great detective sat in his office, looking over the afternoon journals, which had just been brought in by his office assistant—a silent, discreet and exceedingly powerful young man known as Tony Western.

As the detective had expected, the newspapers had a great deal to say about the mysterious murder of the diamond-broker, but not a single new fact was presented.

"It is too soon yet," Phenix observed, communing with himself, his assistant having retired to the outer office.

It was Western's business to receive all callers and interrogate them as to what they wanted before admitting them to an interview with the detective.

"Yes, yes, too soon," Phenix continued reflectively. "'We work by wit and not by witchcraft, and wit depends on dilatory time.' How extremely true that is!"

"The more I reflect upon this case the greater I am puzzled. It hardly seems possible that any one could have committed such a murder as this in so public a place and manage to escape without leaving behind him some clew."

"But, it has been done, and as far as I can see, we are not likely to get at the man—any of us, no matter how smart we may think ourselves, unless we make some blunder, so as to give us a chance, or clew."

The detective's meditations were interrupted at this point by the entrance of his assistant.

"Mr. Solomon Rosengelt wishes to see you, sir, on important business," Western announced.

A slight look of surprise appeared on the massive face of Joe Phenix.

This was the son of the murdered man.

"Show him in, and if any one else calls say that I am busy and cannot be disturbed."

Western nodded and withdrew.

"He comes to seek me and so saves me the trouble of going after him," the detective murmured. "If he had anything to do with this crime he is playing a bold game, and the chances are great that he will make a false move, so I must be on the watch to take advantage of it."

Western showed the gentleman into the room and then retired, closing the door carefully behind him.

Solomon Rosengelt was a man of thirty, slenderly built, and with the air of a student. There was a slight Jewish cast to his features, but not nearly so strong as to proclaim to all the world at the first glance that he was an Israelite.

He was nicely, but not elaborately dressed, and by his appearance would not have been likely to excite any particular attention.

"You remember me, Mr. Phenix?" he said as he entered, and the detective could see that he was nervous and excited.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Rosengelt," answered the detective, rising and making a polite bow. Then he motioned to a chair. "Be seated, please, and allow me to say that I deeply sympathize with you in the great calamity which has fallen upon your family."

The young man sunk into the chair and an expression of pain convulsed his features.

"Ah, yes, it was a fearfully heavy blow!" he said with a deep sigh.

"And your sister—I suppose she is almost crushed to the earth by this heavy affliction?"

"Yes, my poor Rebecca, she goes around the house like one dazed. It is a most fearful thing."

"Words, I know, in a case of this kind, are of little avail," the detective added, gently. "I might say to you that, in the course of nature, your father, who was full of years, almost ripe for the dread reaper, who sooner or later cuts us all down, would have passed away, but that, I fear, would be little consolation."

"My father was not yet sixty—a hale and hearty man, simple in his habits, careful in his ways, and, probably, would have lived twenty years, for his father and grandfather were both over eighty when they died."

"Your father looked to be older than that."

"It was his long gray beard and hair which gave him the appearance of age," the son explained. "But his hair and beard commenced to turn gray when he was about forty."

"Yes, I have met cases of that kind."

"Neither words or tears will bring him back. All that is left for my sister and myself is to avenge his cruel murder."

"Yes, I should think that it would be a satisfaction to you to bring the criminal to justice."

"To the task I will devote the rest of my life!" the young man declared with flaming eyes.

"That is the reason I have come to see you. I have talked the matter over with Rebecca and we are of one mind. I am satisfied from that diamond case, which you handled so well, that you thoroughly understand your business, and if this cowardly assassin can be brought to justice you are the man to perform the task."

"Your confidence flatters me, and I can assure you that, if I undertake the job, I will leave no stone unturned to achieve success."

"I do not doubt it in the least!" the other declared. "And that is the reason I come to you. I have less confidence in the regular detectives than in a man like yourself. Besides, I will be at your back to urge you on, for I must have blood atonement for this crime! The spirit of the old Jewish law must be observed—an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth!"

Joe Phenix was watching the countenance of the speaker earnestly, and the conviction forced itself upon his mind that the man was thoroughly in earnest.

"As I said, I came to you because I have no confidence in the regular detectives," he continued. "I went to see the superintendent of police this morning, and had a conversation with him, and with several of the detectives, and I could plainly see they suspected that I knew more of the affair than I choose to reveal."

"The best and ablest of men are liable to make mistakes," the detective observed.

"Ah, yes; but they are starting on a false scent, and as I saw that whatever information I might give them would be more likely to be used to convince the world that either I or my sister had something to do with my father's cruel murder than to find the real assassin, I did not say anything."

"Have you a clew, then, which may lead to the discovery of the murderer?" Joe Phenix asked, all attention.

"Oh, no; but there are two or three little things connected with my father that, if known by a skillful detective, might aid him in his search for the murderer."

"Yes, trifles light as air apparently, sometimes lead to the weaving of webs which in-snare crafty men, and bring their necks within the hangman's noose."

"I understand the theory upon which the police are going," the young man remarked. "It is the old idea—they argue that he who will profit most by the death of the victim must have had something to do with the death."

"Well, you must admit that it is a strong argument, and the annals of crime prove that, in many a case, it is the truth."

"Yes, but it is not always so; there are very many exceptions to the rule!" the other declared.

"That is true, but in a case like this, where there is absolutely no clew, the detectives must adopt some theory."

"I presume so, and so they started on this time-honored one," the young man remarked, sarcastically. "About the first question asked me at Police Headquarters was if I knew how my father was situated?"

"I imagined that he was a wealthy man, and that your sister and yourself would be his heirs."

"That is correct. He was always averse to making a will, but, at last, his lawyer succeeded in persuading him that it would be far better to do so than to allow the law to settle his estate; so, only about a month ago, the will was drawn out, and it is, with other important papers, in the Safe Deposit Company's care."

"I have never seen the document itself, but father read a draft of it to Rebecca and myself on the day he visited the lawyer for the purpose of executing it."

"He valued his estate at a little over five hundred thousand dollars. One hundred thousand of the amount is divided among various Hebrew charities; the balance is equally divided between Rebecca and myself."

"And the moment you told this to the Headquarters detectives I have no doubt they jumped at the idea you had a hand in the tragedy?"

"Oh, yes, I could see that from the expression on their faces, although nothing particular was

said, except that one of them inquired, in a careless manner, where was I at the time of the tragedy, and I answered, just as carelessly, that in company with my sister, I entertained a party of friends, including the Rabbi of our church, from eight o'clock until ten. In fact, they were at the house when the news of the murder was brought to me."

"Which was an *alibi* that must have convinced them that you, personally, had no hand in the affair."

"Yes; but, strange to say, they did not seem to be satisfied, and I noticed that they glanced at each other in a peculiar way."

"I can easily explain that," the detective said. "These acute fellows are always on the lookout for tricks, and when you spoke of this company of friends being at your house at the time the murder was committed, they immediately jumped to the conclusion that you had arranged the matter beforehand, so as to be able to prove an *alibi* if you were accused of committing the deed."

"Upon my word! These gentlemen give me credit for more smartness than I possess," young Rosengelt exclaimed, scornfully.

"That dodge has been worked, and they were up to it," the detective explained.

"Oh, I could see clearly enough that I was suspected, and I am satisfied that ever since I left Police Headquarters, there has been a spy on my track. He followed me to my house, and then from there here, and I do not doubt he is in waiting without to track my footsteps again."

"I will soon see whether that is so or not, just for greens!" Joe Phenix observed, smiling.

He touched the call-bell on the table, and Weston appeared.

CHAPTER IV.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

"TONY, this gentleman thinks he has been shadowed," Joe Phenix said. "Take a look out in the corridor and see if you notice any suspicious man loitering around."

The assistant nodded and disappeared.

"He will soon tell us if any shadow is waiting for you to appear," the detective declared. "He was formerly on the detective force, and there is hardly a professional shadow in the city whom he does not know."

"And, by the way, if you have been followed, and want to play a trick on the fellow, it can be arranged easily enough, if there is only one man on the job. There is a private rear entrance to my apartments through the other room there," and he pointed to a door opposite to the one through which the visitors had entered. "By that means you can depart when your business is finished, without the knowledge of the spy, and leave him to kick his heels in the corridor until he is tired."

Western returned.

"It is Colonel Snorter," he announced. "I came upon him suddenly at the corner, and when I asked him what he was doing down in this region, he said he was waiting to catch a lawyer who owed him five dollars." Then the man withdrew in his noiseless, catlike way.

"The colonel is one of the best shadowers in the business, but I have found him to be such an inveterate liar that I will not have anything to do with him. If he is thrown off the track, he will seldom admit it, but hatch up some plausible lie to make you think that he has done his work well. I have caught him three times, and never give him employment now. The setting of the colonel on your track, though, shows that the Headquarters people think you are a slippery customer to deal with."

"As Heaven is my judge, Mr. Phenix, I know no more about my father's murder than the babe unborn!" the young man declared, tears standing in his dark eyes.

"I firmly believe you, Mr. Rosengelt!" Joe Phenix assured. "If you had a hand in that tragedy you would never come to me."

"Decidedly not! unless I was a fool, and no one ever took me to be one yet!" the son returned, with a husky voice. "And when I saw that suspicion was excited against me at Headquarters, in order to show them that they had made a mistake, I authorized the chief to offer a reward of five thousand dollars for the apprehension and conviction of the murderer."

"That was certainly a liberal offer, and it ought to have put the detectives of the force on their metal; but I do not doubt that most of them regarded it as a bluff on your part."

"Probably; there are many men in this world so obstinate that when they get an idea into their head they stick to it through thick and thin."

"That is just exactly what a detective ought not to do. He should never blindly commit himself to any theory, but be always ready and willing to start on a fresh tack. Now, if the Headquarters men have made up their minds that you instigated the murder, they will devote all their efforts toward entrapping you, and so give time and opportunity for the real criminal to get safely away."

"That is very true, but you will not be led astray, and may be able to strike the right path."

"I can try, at all events, and it goes without saying that I will do better than by stumbling along blindly on a false trail."

"Now for the information which I fancy may aid you, although I will admit that I do not exactly see how it will; but I am not a detective."

"A little thing, which might not seem of any importance to you, might give me the clew to the whole mystery," Phenix suggested.

"But before I begin let me say, both my sister and myself are so anxious to avenge the cruel murder of our father that we are willing to give ten thousand dollars apiece, twenty thousand dollars in all, for the apprehension and conviction of the assassin."

"That is a princely offer, indeed! Do you propose to make it public?"

"No, it is for you alone," the young man replied. "Both Rebecca and I have so much confidence in you, we are satisfied that, if you cannot catch the villain, it cannot be done."

"I appreciate the compliment, I assure you," the detective replied with a bow.

"If I were to make public the offer of so great a reward, the world at large would be apt to believe with these detectives, that I was merely doing it to throw dust in the eyes of the people—to keep them from thinking that I had anything to do with the affair."

"It might have that result; then, too, it would stimulate hundreds of people to try their skill, which would render the criminal so cautious in his movements, that it would be almost an impossibility to catch him."

"The reward of twenty thousand is for you, and the more quickly you earn it the better satisfied will my sister and myself be!" the young man urged. "In addition, you can draw on us for any expense necessary for the prosecution of your plans. Here is a check for a thousand dollars on the Grand Central National Bank, drawn to your order as a retaining fee." And as he spoke, Solomon Rosengelt drew the check from his pocketbook and handed it to the detective.

"A man ought to do good work for you if liberal pay is any inducement."

"Ah, my dear Mr. Phenix, despite the fact that we Jews bear the reputation of being a stingy race, money is no more than so much water to my sister and myself in this case. We would sooner spend every cent we possess, and beg our bread from door to door, than allow our father's murderer to escape!" Rosengelt cried with fiery energy.

Joe Phenix was visibly impressed by the firm determination of the son.

"I will accept the check, Mr. Rosengelt," he said, "but I am not going to drive a hard bargain with you, nor take advantage of the painful position in which you are now placed. Whatever I draw on you for expenses I will deduct from the amount of the reward, and I shall spend money in this case as profusely, if it is needed, as though I had a national bank at my back."

"You have *carte blanche* to go ahead just as freely as you desire," young Rosengelt declared.

"Now, for the few facts which I think may aid you. In my interview with the superintendent of police he was particular to question me if my father ever had transactions with any crooks, for, he explained, 'If he had, some crook might have decoyed him to his death.'

The detective nodded.

"I understood what he was driving at, of course, although I gave no sign that I did. He suspected that it might be possible my father was a 'fence' and bought stolen property on the sly. I told him that, to my knowledge, no crook had ever been inside our doors, and I was positive father never had any business dealing with any man of that kind."

"I told him the same thing when he questioned me on the subject," Joe Phenix observed.

"But, there is a secret connected with our business which I did not reveal to him, for when I saw they were on a false scent I made up my mind to reserve the information for you."

"We were diamond-brokers, you know; but, in addition to selling diamonds, we also *bought* them—that is, from certain parties. In plain words, we did a little pawnbroking-business; we would loan about one-third of the value, but only in large amounts, to certain people whom we believed we could trust to keep the matter quiet. My father got into it by accommodating a customer. The wife of a high official bought a ten thousand dollar diamond necklace of us. She had a son, who was a rather fast young man; he got in a scrape and needed three thousand dollars to get him out. She did not dare to ask her husband for the money so she brought the necklace to us, for the sum must be raised immediately, and my father consented to advance it, for she said that in a month or so she could easily get the money. In order to keep within the law we pretended to buy the necklace, it being understood that the lady could redeem it at any time within a year by paying the usual pawnbroker interest."

"What bearing has this on the case?"

"You will see. Many times parties would not even come to our store, although sadly in

need of money, and they would write to my father to come to their houses, bringing such jewels with him, just as if they desired to purchase, and then they would arrange a loan."

"Now the idea has occurred to me that my father was on his way to the house of some such customer when he was killed, for I know of no other business which could have taken him in that direction. He never quitted the house at night except upon some such errand."

"He did not say anything previous to his going?"

"No, only that he had a little business to which he must attend. My father was an odd man in business matters, and any such affair as this he kept strictly to himself, until it was concluded; then he would tell me, and I would make a memorandum of the matter."

"If he was on his way to see a customer of this kind would he not have money with him besides that in his pocketbook?"

"Yes, if any previous arrangement had been made. Usually it required two visits. On the first he inspected the jewels and told what he could afford to give; on the second he carried the money."

Joe Phenix mused for a few minutes in silence; then, raising his head, he said:

"I think you have given me a clew to the mystery. You said the amounts loaned were large?"

"Yes, never less than a thousand dollars and from that as high as ten thousand. We would not bother with small sums."

"Is it possible for you to tell whether your father had, or had not, a large sum of money with him?"

"It is not. Father usually kept from five to ten thousand dollars in his own private safe, which he used in this one particular branch of our business. We gained our customers in this line by being able to advance the money at a moment's notice."

"That safe is securely locked; the knowledge of the combination died with my father, and it will have to be forced open, and that, of course, cannot be done without due process of law in the settlement of his estate. If there is no money in the safe, then it is certain my father had a large amount on his person at the time he was killed, and that money was taken by the man who struck the blow. If there is five or six thousand dollars in the drawer, it would not prove whether he had taken any money or not. I have known him to have as high as ten thousand dollars there, then again it has run down as low as three thousand."

"Yes, but it is easy to construct a theory from what you have said," the detective remarked.

"Some one, knowing that your father did business in this way, laid a trap for him. They arranged for him to advance money. He was on his way to keep the appointment with the money on his person when he was waylaid and killed. The person who killed him was his presumptive customer, and therefore, when he was accosted, he did not suspect that there was any danger, and the assassin was able to get an opportunity to deal the fatal blow. Then the large sum of money was taken, but neither his pocketbook nor jewelry were touched, so as to give the impression that he had not been robbed."

"I believe you have hit upon the truth," Rosengelt exclaimed, in a tone of conviction.

"And all the circumstances point to a woman as the doer of the deed!" Joe Phenix added.

"A woman?"

"Yes, a stiletto, but little bigger around than a knitting-needle, stole your father's life away; a tiny dagger—a woman's weapon, and the odds are great that that woman is a foreigner. Run over the list of your customers now. Is there any of them open to suspicion?"

Rosengelt was silent for a few moments, his brows contracted in thought. Then he shook his head.

"I do not recall one whom I would suspect of being able to commit such a deed."

"Do you keep a record of all your transactions?"

"Yes."

"And the names of your customers?"

"Yes."

"I will go over the list with you to-night, if it is agreeable," Joe Phenix said. "In fact, I will make a copy of it, and then make it my business to look into the record of each particular one of all the list."

"It is true that I may only have my labor for my pains," he added, "for if I mistake not, you stated that a transaction of this shady kind would not be put on record until it was concluded."

"Yes, I did so."

"Then if it was a new customer the name would not be on the books."

"It would not."

"And the chances are about a thousand to one that it is a new customer!" Joe Phenix declared. "Well, I will look into the matter, anyway, and while I am busy with my examination something new may turn up."

"I will expect you to-night, then," Rosengelt said, rising.

"Yes, I will be on hand. Go out by the rear

door," the detective advised, arising and unlocking the portal.

"That rascal of a shadow thinks he is so smart that it is a pleasure to make a fool of him once in a while."

"To-night, and may the God of Israel grant us success!"

"Amen!" cried Joe Phenix's deep voice.

CHAPTER V.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

AND now, dear reader, we must go back for a few hours.

It is ten o'clock, just one hour after the time when the lifeless body of Abraham Rosengelt was discovered by the park policeman.

Hardly a musket-shot from the spot where the murdered man was found stands the house of one of the most prominent men in the metropolis, Jefferson Vanderhausen, one of the solid men of New York, a great gun in Wall street, and president of the Grand Central National Bank.

The neighborhood of Washington Square is not exactly the location where a stranger to the city would look for the residence of one of the leading financiers, a man reputed to be worth ten millions of dollars, but an old inhabitant would not have been surprised, for he would have understood that the house was an old family mansion.

Three generations of Vanderhausens had been born beneath its roof, and though the present owner had money enough to set up as gorgeous a palace on Fifth avenue as any of the money kings possessed, yet he preferred to stick to the old roof-tree.

Just as the hands of the clock pointed to the hour of ten on the night of which we write—just the same time, by the way, that the superintendent of police and Joe Phenix got into the coupe, after their unsatisfactory examination into the tragedy in the Park—a well-dressed young gentleman ascended the steps of the Vanderhausen mansion and agitated the bell.

He was about the medium size, with a well-proportioned figure, and a rather long, oval face, whose dark hue gave him a foreign look.

Altogether he was a handsome, dashing young man, and any one well acquainted with New York and its people would immediately have set him down for one of the "bloods" of the metropolis.

In this they would have been correct, but though he was one of the gilded youths he was also a business man.

Horace Lemountain he was called, the junior partner of the well-known Wall street broker firm, Briggs and Lemountain.

He was of French descent. His grandfather had made a fortune with Astor in the fur trade, and at one time the family had ranked as one of the wealthiest in the city, but Horace's father had been bitten by the demon, speculation. He had not been satisfied with the princely fortune which had come to him, but craved more, and like the monkey in the fable who saw his spoils reflected in the water, doubled in size, in grasping for the shadow, he lost the substance.

When he died he had less than twenty thousand dollars, which he left to his two children, for Horace had a sister, older than himself.

This sister, Pauline by name, was the wife of Jefferson Vanderhausen, so the fact that her father's estate was not one-tenth as great as every one expected did not trouble her, and as Horace had a good business in Wall street, he had no reason to complain, so it was supposed.

But, in reality, it was a dreadful blow to him, for he was a young man of extravagant tastes, one of the fellows who set the fashions, a high-roller, and as the elder Lemountain had kept his own counsel in regard to his impaired fortune, never allowing any one to suspect that he was not still an extremely wealthy man, the son squandered his money in all sorts of foolish ways, expecting to come in for a million or two when his father died.

He kept "a stiff upper lip" though, and no one but his sister, who, being some fifteen years older, had been more like a mother to him than a sister, suspected that he was not in "easy street," to use the cant phrase.

Stay! that statement is not exactly correct, for the sister's husband, who was almost old enough to be her father, the wily financier, who bore the reputation among his fellows of being a hard nut to crack, suspected the truth, as the reader will see anon.

The footman answered the bell—the banker's house was officered like the palace of a duke, boasting a round dozen of servants, nearly all of whom were English, for like many another purse-proud man, the banker did not like the independent ways of American servants.

"Is my sister in, Thomas?" the young man asked.

"Yes, sir, you will find her up in her room; she told me that when you come for to send you right up," the servant replied in an extremely respectful way.

Young Lemountain was one of the kind of men who believed in "tips," and many a piece of his silver had "greased" the palms of the banker's servants.

"All right; I will go up. Is the governor

in?" the young man asked, as he entered the hall, and the servant closed the door.

"Yes, sir, and a blasted row he is kicking up, too, begging your parding for putting it so strongly. He is a-going hover the bills with the butler, and if his nibs wasn't a Frenchman who thinks that it is all right for him to get down on his blessed marrow-bones, and be kicked when the governor wants a little amusement in that line, he would never stand such bad language in the world."

"Yes, when the governor gets in a passion he cuts up pretty rusty, but then the bad language is considered in the wages."

"Well it ought to be, for flesh and blood couldn't stand it if it wasn't!" the other replied.

Lemountain proceeded up-stairs like a man well acquainted with the way, knocked at a door on the second landing and was bidden to enter by a woman's voice.

He found himself in the boudoir of the mistress of the mansion.

She bore a striking likeness to her brother, and was tall and finely proportioned. Any one seeing the two together would have immediately guessed that they were brother and sister, for both had the same oval face, the same olive complexion, and coal-black hair and eyes.

Mrs. Vanderhausen was sitting by the center-table upon which a drop-light was placed; a book was in her hand, but she was not reading, evidently too nervous and agitated to fix her attention upon the printed page.

"Ah, you have come at last," she said, with a sigh, evidently of relief. "I have been expecting you for the last half-hour."

"Well, I told you anywhere from half-past nine to ten, and it is just ten," he said, with a glance at the costly marble clock ticking away on the mantel, and taking a seat on the other side of the table as he spoke.

"Now, Horace, let me speak plainly to you," she said, her voice trembling with emotion. "This must have an end; it is utterly impossible for me to supply you with any more money, after this time. All your own little fortune is gone, swallowed up in the same dark gulf into which about all our father's money went; mine too I have given you, and when I came to the end of that, I have deceived my husband in order to get money from him to help you along."

"Yes, I know, Pauline, it is dreadful!" the young man admitted, in a gloomy tone. "You have done for me what not one sister in a thousand would do for a brother, no matter how much she loved him."

"Ah, you have no idea what I have done for your sake this night!" the woman said, in low, suppressed tones, and she looked around her as though she was afraid that the very walls had ears.

"I don't want to think of it—I must not think of your sacrifices or I will go mad!" the young man exclaimed. "As Heaven is my judge, Pauline, if I was not on the brink of ruin I would not have come to you for this favor, but I am reduced to such an extremity that if I could not raise five thousand dollars by to-morrow morning, then the only course left for me would be to put a revolver to my head and blow out my foolish brains."

The lady shuddered and covered her eyes for a moment with her hands.

"Oh, do not talk in that dreadful way!" she cried.

"It is the truth, Pauline. I am utterly desperate, I am at the end of my rope, and rather than submit to the jeers of the world—to have the finger of scorn pointed at me as the dishonest bankrupt, who has used money intrusted to his care and lost it, I would die!"

"Oh, my dear Horace, is it as bad as that?" she asked, with an anxious face.

"Yes, it is; I became involved before I knew it, and the situation seemed so that if I used the funds in my charge I could not only avoid ruin, but, in part, retrieve my losses; but the market went against me, and my last state was worse than the first."

"Well, I can help you; but, remember, Horace, it is for the last time! My will is good, gladly would I give you money, but it is not possible for me to get any more, and if you had not impressed me with the belief that it was a matter of life and death I could not have got this for you."

"What is the amount?"

"Five thousand dollars," and she took a roll of bills from her bosom and handed it to him. "That is the sum you said."

"Yes, this will see me through," and there was a curious expression on his face as he looked first at the money and then at the agitated woman. "I am ever so much obliged to you. That sounds dreadfully weak and commonplace, don't it, coming from a man whose life you have saved!"

"If I had not been satisfied that your life was at stake I could not have done what I have done!" and she heaved a sigh which seemed to come from her very heart.

"Oh, I appreciate it, believe me, Pauline!" he exclaimed. "I will be careful in the future. I will avoid speculation and stick to my regular business. Our firm has a good line of cus-

tomers and we are making money, but, like all the rest of the moths who fly into the candle of speculation and burn their wings, I wanted to get rich suddenly; to dazzle the eyes of the boys on the street by my success, and pose as a great man. I have got my lesson, though, and you can depend upon it that I will stick strictly to my legitimate business hereafter."

"Oh, I hope so!" the lady rejoined, her hands clasped as if in prayer.

"You know, sis, I will be able to return this money to you inside of a month."

"Yes, well, I hope so," but she did not seem to be at all anxious about it.

"Oh, I will look out for that," and he placed the roll of bills in the inside pocket of his coat.

"Horace, one thing you must promise me," Mrs. Vanderhausen exclaimed, abruptly.

"What is it?"

"You must never mention to a soul that I gave you this money!" and as she spoke her face grew white, all color deserted her lips, and her eyes seemed fairly ready to start out of her head, as she leaned over and placed her nervous, and, for a woman, remarkably muscular hand upon the knee of the gentleman.

"Of course not! You must not think that I am a blab. I know too much to tell my business to any one!"

"You will swear it! for, oh! you do not know what the dreadful consequence may be to me if you tell any one of the circumstance!"

"Don't you worry, sis; the secret will be as safe in my possession as though no one knew it but yourself," and he gently patted her head in a soothing way. "You are inclined to be a little hysterical, and you must try and control yourself," he encouraged.

"Yes, I can feel that my nerves are all unstrung. Reach me that little vial on the mantel-piece, please, by the clock."

He took the vial. It had a tiny glass affixed to the cork. Into this she poured a few drops of the medicine.

"What is it, chloral?"

"Yes."

"Better be careful! That is a dangerous habit to get into," he warned.

"I must have it, or I shall go crazy!" she exclaimed.

"Oh, it is all right if you do not let it get the best of you," he remarked. "If you do not become a slave to it, why, I have no doubt it is a very good thing."

"Never fear as to that."

"Well, I must be off. Good-night, sis!" then he kissed her in the most affectionate manner and departed. The woman sunk on her knees.

"Heaven have mercy on me, but it was to save his life!" she cried.

CHAPTER VI.

THE BANKER SPEAKS.

THE young man was in a brown study as he descended the stairs.

"Now, how in the name of all that is wonderful did she manage to raise this money?" he muttered. "Five thousand dollars don't grow on every bush, nor is it to be had for the asking, even if the woman is the wife of a bank president."

"I knew that old Vanderhausen has been looking after her pretty sharply on the money question lately. I have an idea that he thinks she is letting me have money, and that is the reason why he keeps her so short."

"Pretends that he doesn't want her to pay cash and so cuts her pin-money down; tells her to buy what she wants and have the bills sent to him, and to get everything she fancies too."

"Very liberal indeed!" And there was an ugly sneer on the handsome face of the young man.

"And he is a man who prides himself on paying cash too and hates bills as the devil hates holy water, but it is all a cunning device to keep from giving her any large amount of money, for he suspects she will be apt to turn some over to me, the miserly old hunk!"

By this time, Lemountain had reached the foot of the stairs, and Thomas, the footman, came gliding toward him, with his snake-like motion.

"Begging your parding, sir, but would you be so kind as to step in the library and see the governor, if you please."

"Oh, he knows that I am here then?"

"Yes, sir, you are right he does! Just arter I let you hin, he calls me hin to him and ax me who it was."

"Of course you told?—it is no secret!"

"Yes, sir; then he says, says he, watch for Mister Lemountain when he goes hout and tell him I would like to see him in the library."

At that moment the door of the library, which was at the extreme end of the hall, opened, and the stern face of the banker appeared.

"Ah, is that you, Horace? I want to see you for a moment!" Vanderhausen said.

"Certainly, sir," and, as he advanced toward the library, he muttered between his teeth, "There is mischief afoot; he is too gracious by half!"

"Help yourself to a chair, Horace," the banker said, after the young man entered the room.

"Thank you, sir."

"There is a box of cigars on the table, a present from a Havana friend; you'll find them extra good!" And then, as he was about to close the door, the sound of loud voices came to his ears.

"Hello! what the dence is that?" and the banker took a step into the hall.

Thomas made his appearance from the lower region.

"Oh, Mr. Vanderhausen, come quick, sir, or there'll be murder done!" the footman exclaimed.

"Eh, what is that?"

"It is the butler and the cook—they are going to fight a duel with a carving-knife and a poker in the dining-room."

"I'll soon put a stop to that nonsense!" the banker cried.

In person Vanderhausen was about six feet tall, and muscular in proportion; a man too who did not know the meaning of the word fear.

"Shall I not come with you, sir?" Lemountain asked, rising to his feet.

"No, no! I will speedily settle this trouble!" the banker cried, in his prompt, decided way. "The infernal idiots! I will throw them both out into the street!"

And as the contestants were undersized men, it seemed as if the burly, stalwart Vanderhausen would not have much difficulty in performing the task.

The arrival of the banker on the scene of action put a stop to the trouble, but it was fully ten minutes before he settled matters and returned to the library.

The door had swung to, but when he entered Lemountain sat smoking in the same position that he had occupied when the banker quitted the apartment.

Vanderhausen closed the door carefully behind him, and then took a seat on the other side of the table to where Horace sat.

"You find that a good cigar?" the banker asked.

"Very good!"

"I suppose that you are a judge of that sort of thing?"

"Well, yes, I think I can tell a good cigar when I get hold of one."

"How is business?"

"Well, I cannot complain."

"You do a strictly commission business, I believe?" and the banker fixed his shrewd eyes searchingly on the face of the young man.

"Yes, strictly commission."

"And neither you nor Briggs ever speculate—take a little flyer, just to try the market?"

"Well, I can answer that Briggs does not."

"And I suppose that means that you do?"

"Mr. Vanderhausen, wherefore this cross-examination?" Lemountain said, with a pleasant smile, as though he regarded it as something of a joke. "What do you care whether I speculate or not? Come, let us be open and above-board in this matter. What are you driving at? I am not a particularly wise man, but no one has ever yet made the assertion that I am a flat. Now then, what do you want, for that you do want something I am positive, or else you would never have taken the trouble to invite me in here."

The brows of the banker knitted together, and he pursed up his lips in a peculiar way.

"Well, I must say that you come straight to the mark."

"What is the use of men like you and I beating about the bush?"

"Very true. Well, I will be frank with you. I have been informed that you are on the brink of ruin; that you will not be able to meet your paper to-morrow, and that by sunset you will be a dishonored and disgraced man."

It was with the air of a judge pronouncing sentence that the banker uttered the words, but, to his astonishment, the other did not seem to be at all affected by the words.

He took the cigar out of his mouth, blew forth the smoke, watched the rings for a moment or two in a reflective way as they curled up into the air, then said:

"Supposing that all this is true, what then?"

The banker looked surprised.

"Upon my word, you are taking the matter coolly!" he exclaimed.

"If things are as bad as you surmise, will it do me any good to get excited about it?" the young man asked.

"Well, no, I suppose not, but this coolness on your part seems to be unnatural."

"Oh, it is not. I have always made it a rule to take things as unconcernedly as possible."

"Egad! I believe that is correct!"

"Yes, yes, no mistake about it! But to return to our mutton. I judge that you have not invited me to this conference merely for the pleasure of telling me that you have heard that to-morrow's sun will light me to my ruin."

"Certainly not. Heaven forbid that I should take a pleasure in any man's misfortune. I wanted to ascertain from you if there was any truth in the report."

"My dear brother-in-law, can't you have

patience to wait until to-morrow, and then you will learn without fail?" the other exclaimed, laughing as though he considered the matter to be a good joke.

The banker was nettled by his levity.

"I need not wait until to-morrow to ascertain the truth," he exclaimed. "I know the report is true. I know that you have been caught in a corner. You have sold stocks that you do not possess, and to-morrow is settling day; the balance against you is from ten to twenty thousand dollars, and I don't believe that it is possible for you to raise the money. I presume that is what you came to see your sister about to-night, but that well has run dry. You will not get any more money from that quarter."

The face of Lemountain became grave.

"I presume that my sister has asked you for money, and you, anticipating that she wanted to give it to me, refused to let her have it?" he said, slowly.

"My dear fellow, your guess is correct; in my opinion lending you money is like throwing it into the sea—it never comes back!"

"You may fancy that I have been blind—that I have not known what has been going on, right under my nose, for the last five years, but if you have any such notion, you are greatly mistaken. I have not interfered before because I love your sister—my wife—and I desire her happiness above all things in this life, and I fancied that in time she would see the folly of squandering money upon you."

"Ain't you putting it rather harshly, sir?" the young man asked, a slight frown upon his brow.

"I think not. I think that if the question was submitted to a jury of twelve good men and true, the verdict would be that I had not stated the case half strongly enough."

"Foot the items up for yourself. See!" and the banker commenced to count on his fingers. "First, there was your own little inheritance, ten thousand dollars; that being yours, you of course had a right to throw it away if you chose; it went. Then you borrowed your sister's share, ten thousand more, and that vanished; now every year you have got from your sister not less than five thousand dollars in the twelve months, money which I gave her, at her request, thinking that she needed dresses, jewelry or what not, as women do, and she turned the money over to you, and away that went to join the rest. In round numbers you have got rid of about forty-five thousand dollars in the last five years, only ten of which was your own, and now you are in the hole again for ten or twenty thousand dollars more!"

"Well, you have made out a pretty strong case against me, haven't you?" the young man remarked, as coolly as possible.

"It seems so to me. I honor your sister for the love she bears you; it shows that she is a noble woman, and if I thought that you would turn over a new leaf in the future, and do better than you have done in the past, I would not cut off the supplies as I have done."

"But it is of no use! There is a point where patience ceases to be a virtue."

"And I suppose you consider that that point is reached?"

"I do indeed!"

"What is the object of this revelation—simply to show me what a fool I have made of myself, and how hopeless my future is?" Lemountain asked, with bitterness in his voice.

"No, sir! I would not derive any satisfaction from anything of the kind. For your sister's sake, I want to save you, young man, from your worst enemy, yourself!"

"Save me—how?" inquired the other, a peculiar gleam in his eyes.

A small, narrow book lay on the table by the side of the writing materials; the banker opened it. It was his check-book.

"You see what this is?"

"Yes."

"You write a hand very much like mine, so much like it that if you should fill one of these checks for ten or twenty thousand dollars—whatever sum you need to meet your liabilities, on the morrow—payable to your order, and should sign my name to it, taking pains to imitate my signature, an easy task for an expert penman like yourself, familiar as you are with it, the chances are about a million to one that the check would be cashed at my bank to-morrow without any question, for they all know you there—know that you are my brother-in-law—and they would come to the natural conclusion that I had come forward to help you out of your difficulties, for it was the common report at the close of to-day's business that you would go under to-morrow."

"It seems to me, Mr. Vanderhausen, that you are advising me to commit a forgery!" the young man said, his face hard and rigid.

"Yes, if the case got into the police court it would be called by that name."

"You desire that I shall place myself bound hand and foot in your power?"

"Yes, I do, for it is the only way to save you from yourself."

"It might be a difficult matter for you to prove that this check was a forgery," the young man said with a dark look.

"Oh, no, that is all arranged," the banker replied.

"If you notice, the last check is number 900; you would naturally number yours 901. 900 was given to one of my servants this evening, and in the presence of another witness, and I took care to call their attention to the fact that 900 was the number, and that the next man would get 901. Those witnesses will testify, when the time comes, that you were left here in the room, with the check-book on the table, while I was called down-stairs, and that I was absent long enough to give you plenty of time to commit the forgery."

"Ah, it was all a trick, then?" and a fierce look shone in his eyes.

"Yes; but, of course, they are in ignorance of the purport of the maneuver."

"Now, then, will you have the kindness to tell me why you have gone to all this trouble to get me in your power?" the other asked, very cool, and a trifle pale.

"I have already told you. For your sister's sake I want to save you from yourself," the banker answered, sternly. "So long as you steer a straight course, and do not get into trouble, the forged check will not be used against you; but I keep it as a menace, to force you to behave yourself. And now I will speak still more plainly: For the last six months I have had you shadowed, as the police say. I had a curiosity to know how you spent your time outside of business hours."

An angry expression appeared upon the face of the young man, and in his anger there was mingled a trace of alarm.

"So you went to the trouble and expense of putting a spy upon me?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir, I did," the banker replied, in his firm and decided way. "I made up my mind that I would find out just what kind of a man you were. You know it is the custom of us bankers to have our employees, who handle large sums of money, carefully watched every once in a while, so that we can be sure in regard to them. If the detectives report that a man who is only getting two thousand dollars a year is living at the rate of three or five, then we naturally suspect that there is a screw loose somewhere."

"Will you allow me to suggest to you that I am not in your bank," the young man remarked, sarcastically.

"Sir, I am interested in you because your sister is my wife, and she loves you. I know that it would give her pain if anything should happen to you; I want to save her from that pain, if I can. If it were not for that, you could go to the devil in your own way, as fast as you desired, without my troubling my head about you!"

"You are certainly frank, if your language is not agreeable," young Lemountain remarked with a sneer.

"Oh, well, the circumstances demand it!" the banker retorted. "This is not a matter to be handled with kid gloves."

"Will you allow me to ask how long this spy has been on my track, and if I am under surveillance now—if there is a spy without, waiting to track my footsteps when I leave this house?" And the young man's face was pale, with a fierce look in his eyes, something akin to that which shines in the orbs of the hunted beast of prey, as he put the question.

"Oh, no! What kind of men do you think these detectives are?" the banker inquired. "How long do you suppose it takes one of these expert shadows to find out all about a man like yourself?"

"I have no knowledge whatever on the subject," the other replied, dryly.

"The man was on your case exactly one week, and I received his report last Monday morning. For one week he shadowed you from the time you left your business in Wall street until you went to bed at night."

"The fellow must be skillful at his trade, for I never suspected such a thing," Lemountain remarked, with a reckless air, as though he cared but little for the coming revelation.

"If he was not skillful he could not continue in the business," the banker replied. "His report in regard to you is an extremely bad one. If any such account should be furnished of a young man in my employ, he would not be in his position ten minutes after I received it."

"May I again remind you that I am not in your employ?" Lemountain exclaimed, haughtily.

"That is not necessary; I am as well aware of that fact as you are!" the banker retorted, in as equally a haughty way.

"The detective reports that you are addicted to a number of vices, any one of which almost is enough to ruin any young business man. You are a hard drinker, and although you have an iron-like head which enables you to carry off your liquor, so that you are always able to get home, and are never picked out of the gutter, yet there is no doubt that five nights out of the seven when you go to bed, you are very much the worse for drink."

"I take a glass of wine when I feel like it, or whisky or brandy, if I fancy it will agree better with me, but as to being a hard drinker, that is

absurd," the young man exclaimed, indignantly. "And even your remarkably vigilant spy is obliged to admit that I am always able to take care of myself."

"Then you are addicted to the fatal vice of gambling, being a constant patron of two of the large, up-town gambling hells, where you have lost heavy sums, besides being noted at one of the fast clubs, to which you belong, as being the most inveterate card-player in the organization."

"It would only be a waste of time for me to attempt to answer such accusations as this!" Lemountain exclaimed, angrily. "I have visited, with friends, some of these gambling-hells, dropped in as I would drop into a saloon, had a drink and a bit of lunch, and ventured five or ten dollars at the table, just to pay for my grub, as one of the rounders would say. At a certain club, there is a great deal of card-playing, I will admit, and I plead guilty to joining in, once in awhile, but the stakes are never high."

"Strange how this able detective has been deceived!" Vanderhausen exclaimed. "He reports that you have been known to lose five thousand dollars at faro in a single night, and that it is a common thing for you to rise from the table at the club, one to two thousand dollars out of pocket!"

"Bah! it is too ridiculous!" the young man exclaimed. "But I understand it! The detective was a shrewd fellow; he surmised that you wanted a *bad* report, and so he colored the matter as highly as possible."

"Oh, no; he knew well enough that I wanted the truth, and I fancy he reported things exactly as he found them."

"Well, if you choose to believe the word of a hired spy in preference to mine, you are quite at liberty to do so," the young man remarked, with a scornful air.

"Now, Horace, my boy, where is all this going to end?" the banker asked, his voice softening a little. "You cannot keep on in the way that you are going. You have a good business, and, if you stick to it, cannot only enjoy a fine income, but, if you are anyway prudent, can put by enough each year, to make you an independent man by the time you are fifty. I thought you were losing your money, speculating in stocks; that is bad enough, but gambling is worse, particularly when you set out to beat professional gamblers at their own game. Why, if this detective's story is anywhere near correct, you must have lost forty or fifty thousand dollars in gambling this year."

"Now, Horace, the end of this will be that you will be tempted to commit some crime, and the first thing you know you will be on your road to State Prison, and from that fate I want to save you, if I can, for your sister's sake."

"You need not worry yourself about the matter, sir," Lemountain remarked with fine disdain. "I am not going to make a fool of myself, and I do not intend to walk into this trap which you have set for me."

"The weapon will not be used against you as long as you behave yourself," the broker remarked.

"I regret that I have not sufficient confidence in human nature to believe that assertion!" Lemountain declared, his lip curling in scorn as he rose to his feet.

"Well, if you choose to reject my offer and to-morrow are sold out, you will not have any one to blame but yourself," Vanderhausen observed.

"My affairs may not be in so desperate a state as you imagine, but to-morrow will tell the tale. Good-evening!" And the young man departed.

The banker sat for a few minutes in meditation, and he drummed lightly with his fingers on the table.

"Whom the gods would destroy they first make mad," he remarked at last. "How extremely true that is. Here I offered the young man a chance to get on his feet again—the sole condition being that he would behave himself, attend to his business, and cut loose from his vices. He refuses! Well, as he says, to-morrow will tell the story. I am puzzled by his coolness. Can it be possible that things are not as bad as they have been reported, and there is a chance for him to pull through; or has he succeeded in getting some one to come to his assistance? Briggs cannot do anything, I know, for he is at the end of his rope. Horace was evidently here after money to-night, but I blocked his game there, for I took care that Mrs. V. should not have any to give him. It is a very strange affair."

The banker rose to his feet and as he did so his eyes fell upon the safe which stood in the corner."

It was a small, ornamental affair, constructed in the shape of a desk, and cased with wood, so that no one not accustomed to such things would suspect that it was a safe.

The front of the supposed desk swung to one side, instead of lowering, exposing the safe within.

This door had a spring latch so that it locked upon closing.

Thus, in order to get into the safe, it was necessary, first to unlock the wooden door, and

then open the safe after the usual fashion by means of the combination.

The moment Vanderhausen's eyes fell upon the safe an exclamation of amazement escaped from his lips.

It looked as if the wooden door of the safe was not tightly closed.

He advanced toward it.

His eyes had not deceived him—the door was ajar!

"Well, well, I don't understand this," he muttered. "Can it be that the last time I went to the safe I neglected to close the door? It does not seem possible!"

He opened the door and then, to his utter surprise, discovered that the door of the safe itself was unlocked.

The banker stared in amazement for a moment.

"Upon my word!" he cried. "This is a most astonishing thing! When did I go to the safe last? Why, it was when I came home this afternoon just before dinner. I put that memorandum of Heartley's away, and I am certain I closed the safe and set the combination. No doubt whatever about that in my mind, although I might, in my hurry to get down to dinner, have been careless enough not to shut the outer door tightly."

And then a dark thought came into the banker's mind.

"Can it be possible that Horace tampered with the safe during my brief absence? Did he notice that the door was open, and, in his desperation, open the inner safe, thinking that he might find money there? But how could he have hit upon the combination? Oh, it does not appear to be possible!"

"There is nothing of any value in the safe—that is, nothing but papers—Stay! Mrs. V.'s jewels!"

And he himself opened the center compartment.

The jewel-case was there, but to satisfy himself he opened the box.

Nothing had been disturbed.

"This is indeed a most mysterious case!" the banker declared, completely puzzled.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FRONT LINE GIRL.

THE Paragon Theater, on Broadway, New York, for the past few years has been the home of comic opera. As fast as one palled upon the taste of the patrons another was produced.

But the Paragon productions were all about the same, and the chief charm of the entertainment lay in the fact that no matter what the opera, or burlesque might be, there were always some twenty-five or thirty pretty girls employed in the play, and as far as costumes were concerned the manager went on the old adage that "beauty unadorned is adorned the most," and therefore the patrons of the Paragon saw a good deal of the human form divine.

Naturally the theater was the great resort for all the young bloods of the city.

It is near the hour of eleven, the performance is rapidly approaching the end at the Paragon.

Behind the scenes of the theater we will take the reader and introduce him to "the regions of the blessed," as any one of the young, sallow, gilded youths in front would consider it.

Two girls, clad in the airy costume common to the nymphs of the corps de ballet, which consisted of pink silk tights, a profusion of fleecy skirts of exceeding brevity, and a scanty bodice of the same gauzy material, stood in the "wings" ready to go on for the closing tableau.

One was rather tall, with a pale, spiritual face, lit up by large, jet-black eyes, a peculiar-looking girl, not handsome, although "made up" for the stage, with her paint and powder, she looked pretty from the front of the house, but her eyes were strange, and there was something odd and uncanny about her face.

In private life, when dressed for the street, no one would have taken her for a beauty.

She was called Katherine Merrygold.

Her companion was a plump, pretty English girl, who answered to the name of Polly Percival.

Both of them were "front line girls." All corps de ballets are divided into two parts; the prettiest girls, and the best dancers, are placed nearest the audience, and so acquire the distinction of being "front line" ladies; the more ugly and clumsy girls are relegated to the rear rank.

"He is not in front to-night," Polly remarked to her companion.

"No, I have not seen him."

"Do you know that I have noticed one funny thing? You are, apparently, able to tell when he is in front, no matter where he sits, or even if he doesn't sit down at all, but just lounges at the back with the ushers," the English girl remarked.

"Yes, I believe that it is true," the other replied with a wearied air, as though the subject was distasteful to her.

"It seems very strange to me. Now, I fancy that I have just as sharp eyes as any one, and I am particularly far-sighted, yet I am not able to recognize people in the front of the house unless they are pretty well down to the footlights."

"I think I would know he was in the audience if he was in the back row of the gallery," Katherine replied, and a slight shiver trembled her form as she spoke.

"What is the matter—are you cold?" Polly asked in a sympathizing way.

"No, I only feel strangely, that is all."

"I am an awful inquisitive thing, and I am just going to bore you with some questions," the English girl declared.

"Oh, I don't mind it, dear; go on and ask what you like," the other replied, with a faint smile.

"If I did not take an interest in you I should not do it, you know," Miss Percival explained, passing her arm caressingly around the waist of the other. "I am a new-comer, you know, and so I do not know much about this little romance of yours. I know that there is a fine-looking gentleman, evidently very swell, who comes to the theater nearly every night, and who usually occupies one of the seats in a particular part of the house, that is if he comes anyway early; if he doesn't, then he does not sit down at all, but remains at the back, but, as I say, you always seem to know that he is there, just the same."

"The other girls are a little jealous of your swell beau, particularly when they see him waiting at the stage-door after the show is over to escort you home, and they say some very spiteful things about you."

"If they say that I do not always behave myself properly, or that this gentleman ever fails to treat me with the utmost respect, just as if I were the finest lady in New York, they say what is not true," the other declared, a spark of fire gleaming in her great, black eyes.

"Oh, they do not say anything outright—they only hint, as spiteful girls will do, you know. They shrug their shoulders, and intimate that they could say a great deal if they cared to talk about the subject."

"Polly, I don't know how it is, but I feel myself attracted to you as I never have been to any other girl in my life," Miss Merrygold declared, abruptly. "So I am going to tell you all about this strange affair, for I think it will relieve my mind to have a confidante."

"You can freely trust me, dear, I give you my word for that. I don't exactly know how it is, either, but I took a liking to you the moment I was introduced, and if I had not I wouldn't have accepted your offer to share your room with me, for I am rather inclined to be a solitary creature, and like to be alone."

"Yes, I am that way, too, and that is the reason why I did not like the professional boarding-house where I lived when I first came to this theater; therefore, when I happened to hear of this furnished room, which is in the house of our old stage-doorkeeper, I was glad to engage it, so I could be by myself, and I know not what impulse prompted me to offer to share with you today, when you happened to mention that you were dissatisfied with your boarding-house, and intended to change."

"Why, it was fate, dear, nothing else in the world; fate which intended in this way to bring us together," Miss Percival exclaimed.

"Yes, I believe it was, for I never had any idea of sharing my room with any one before, although it is plenty big enough for two."

"Well, it is all right now—the matter is settled. My trunk is in the room, and when we go home to-night it will be as chums!" and the lively English girl gave her companion a gentle hug as she spoke.

"I am very glad of it, too, for you, with your bright, sunny nature will cheer me up," Katherine said, earnestly. "I am inclined to be morbid, and since I have become acquainted with this gentleman all sorts of strange ideas come to me sometimes."

"I am very much inclined to be superstitious, I fear," she continued, with a sad smile. "I was born in the island of Jamaica, and had an old black mammy for a nurse, for I lost my mother when I was an infant; the negroes in Jamaica have all sorts of superstitions, and few of them are there who do not believe in Voodoo. I suppose you know what that is."

"Oh, yes, I have read all about that horrible superstition, which these negroes brought from Africa with them, and when I was with the 'Surprise Party' last year, we went all through the South, and heard plenty of awful tales of the Voodoo from the servants in the hotels."

"Yes; the believers in the superstition, when they desire to be revenged upon a foe, go to one of the Voodoo priestesses—sometimes it is a man, but more often a woman, in Jamaica. By paying a certain fee, the enemy can be Voodooed—that is, the agent works a charm which will cause the person upon whom it is placed to wither away and die."

"Ugh! isn't it horrible?" exclaimed Polly.

"Yes, and I grew up like a weed with my nature saturated with these horrible tales, and as I was an odd, peculiar girl, who shrunk from society and liked to wander away in the woods by myself, and was afflicted, too, with all sorts of horrible dreams, in which I would sometimes rouse the house with my screams, my old mammy declared that I was intended by nature to be a high priestess of Voodoo, although I was a white-skin, and she often urged me to go and

take lessons from some of the old black hags who pretended to be prophetesses.

"I think that in the end I would have gone crazy if my father had not taken me to England when I was about sixteen. There he died, and a chain of circumstances made me adopt my present life, and the constant change and excitement of it made me forget the unnatural ideas which had been instilled in my mind by my peculiar bringing-up. I forgot all about Voudouism, and the supernatural miracles declared to appertain to it, until I came in contact with this man—my lover, as all the world believes him to be."

"Why, is he your lover?" the English girl asked in astonishment.

"He has never said a single word of love to me since I made his acquaintance."

"Well, that is strange; but he pays you attention?"

"True, and has presented me with some valuable jewelry, which I could not refuse, although in my soul I wanted to do it!" the girl declared, a dark, earnest look on her pale face.

"This is certainly one of the oddest cases that I ever heard of!" the other declared in amazement.

"If you think that way now, I do not know what your opinion will be when you hear all of the story."

"Now you have got my curiosity excited! Go right on with the story, and don't keep me waiting in the agonies of suspense."

"Very well. It was about a month ago that I joined the company here," Miss Merrygold began. "It was the first night that this opera was produced, and I had not been on the stage ten minutes before I saw the face of this gentleman in the audience; all the rest was a vast sea of faces; I could not distinguish one from the other, but his face came out clear and distinct from all the rest."

"The next night he was in front again, and the next, and not a night did he miss the first week, and I grew so accustomed to his presence that I had come to regard it as a matter of course, and, somehow, the conviction flashed upon my mind that he had singled me out from all the other girls, and that impression gave me a feeling of uneasiness."

"My goodness! girls in our line are generally pleased to attract the attention of a good-looking swell, even if they are averse to making acquaintances. It is a triumph due to their charms or their talents, and in either case a tribute to themselves well worth having."

"Well, I cannot explain it, but this gentleman seemed to inspire me with uneasiness, and yet I could not keep my eyes off of him when I was on the stage, and it appeared too—now here is where one of my strange ideas comes in—as if he and I had established communication with each other."

"Well, that was odd!"

"The next performance he was not in front and it seemed as if there was a great gap suddenly opened in my life. And now comes another strange idea. It seems as if a part of myself had suddenly separated and gone away in search of this man."

"My goodness! of all the ideas!" Miss Percival cried.

"Yes, isn't it ridiculous?" the other said, with a sad smile. "I know that it is a lame explanation, but it is the best I can make. The power he seems to exert over me begins about half-past eight at night—the time that I first saw his face; and lasts until about half-past eleven, the hour at which we usually part. If he is not in the audience then, as I tell you, a part of me seems to be absent, looking for him, I suppose; and that is the reason I can always tell whether he is in front or not, without taking the trouble to look. It is absurd, isn't it, dear? but upon my soul, as I am a living girl, it is the truth!"

"Why this is like a bit of an old-time legend! The man has bewitched you—they call it by a different name now, these learned men, magnetism, to be mesmerized, you know. Didn't you ever see anything of that kind?"

"Never!"

"Well, I did once, and it was very odd. A young man was mesmerized; all the professor seemed to do was to make a few passes before his eyes, putting him to sleep, as he called it, and then, while the fellow was apparently just as conscious as he was before, except there was a peculiar expression in his eyes, the professor made him do all sorts of queer things. He gave him a glass of water to drink, telling him that it was wine, and the man praised it, declaring that he had never tasted finer wine in his life, and while he was sipping it, with the greatest gusto, the professor called out suddenly: 'Oh, I've made a mistake and given you ink!' and the way in which the man threw away the glass and began to spit out the water was too funny for anything."

"Yes, now that you recall it to my memory I recollect that I have read of such things, although I have never seen anything of the kind," Miss Merrygold remarked, thoughtfully. "It really does seem as if he exerted some magnetic power over me, but it is altogether different

from anything that I have ever heard or read about."

"How did you happen to make his acquaintance?"

"Well, it was in a commonplace way enough. After a while he used to wait at the back door after the performance was out, and follow me home. I was startled the first night because you know how impudent some of these swells are."

"Yes, I always threaten to speak to the first policeman, and that usually frightens them off."

"But there was no reason for my alarm. He walked quietly along some ten or fifteen paces behind, never attempting to speak to me, but it seemed as if he came just to see that I got safely home."

"For a week or so this happened every night, and I got so used to it that I believe I would have felt strange if I had gone out of the stage-door some night and discovered that he was not there."

"Yes, I suppose so."

"Then, apparently, he made up his mind that he would get acquainted with me, and he hired a furnished room in the house where I lived."

"That was a clever move!"

"Yes; and of course it was not long before Mrs. Garner—she is the landlady, you know—introduced us."

"Natural, under the circumstances, living right in the same house."

"He was very frank; said that he had taken a great interest in me from the time when he had first seen my face, and although he could not explain why, felt the strongest desire in the world to be honored with my acquaintance and friendship."

"It seems that he was attracted to you as much as you were to him."

"Yes; but the strangest part is, that though everybody considers that he is my lover because he escorts me home, yet there has never been anything of the kind between us."

"I suppose I will make his acquaintance now, and, if you are not careful, I will cut you out!"

"You are quite welcome so to do, for I confess that sometimes the feeling that comes over me when he is near makes me sick unto death," the girl exclaimed, in low, suppressed tones.

"There's our music! More anon!"

And then, with the rest, the two girls bounded on the stage, all smiles, to assist in the final tableau.

Five minutes more brought the curtain down, and away the girls hurried to their dressing-rooms to prepare for the street.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LITTLE SUPPER.

It did not take the two girls long to remove their stage costumes and dress themselves to go home.

"I guess you will not find the gentleman here to-night," Miss Percival remarked, as the two approached the back door of the theater.

"He is there!" the other replied, in a tone of conviction. "I can feel the mysterious influence creeping over me which warns me that he is near."

"Don't talk that way!" Polly exclaimed. "You make me have goose-flesh all over me, and I shall really be afraid to look the gentleman in the face."

With a good-night to the old doorkeeper, the two passed through the portal into the street.

There was a group of loungers hanging around to see the stage people come forth, as there usually is at the back-door of theaters of the Paragon stamp, but the gentleman for whom the two girls looked was not there.

"Well, you were wrong for once," Miss Percival announced. "Your instinct played you false this time."

"He is not far off; you will see."

She was right.

At the corner a gentleman stepped forth from the shadow of a doorway and lifted his hat politely.

"I thought that it would be better to wait here for you rather than at the stage-door, and run the gantlet of the staring crowd," he said. "And is this the lady who is to be your room-mate?—Mrs. Garner had to tell me the news to-night."

"Yes, Miss Percival, Mr. Lemountain."

It was the Wall street broker, with whom the reader is already acquainted.

The introduction was suitably acknowledged and then the party proceeded on their homeward way.

"I am very glad indeed that you have come to share Miss Merrygold's apartment, for I think she needs some one to liven her up," the gentleman observed. "And then too the satisfaction that I feel has its rise in a little selfishness. I have often wanted Miss Merrygold to come with me and have a little supper after the performance, but as she is an extremely circumspect young lady a refusal has always been in order, but now that there are two of you, there isn't any reason why you should not go and have a good time."

Katherine looked a little doubtful.

"I don't know about it," she said. "We ladies on the stage have to be so careful, for people are always ready to say unpleasant things about us."

"I am not going to take you to Delmonico's, or any place of that sort, where you will be apt to be seen by a lot of people who know who you are, and so get a chance for gossip, but to a quiet little place on a street just off of Broadway, where there is a ladies' dining-room upstairs, and as the female part of the establishment is not particularly well-patronized we will probably have the room to ourselves, and be just as private as though we were in our own apartment."

"Well, I don't see as there is any objection," Miss Percival remarked, for she, like most English people, liked to take a snack before going to bed. "It will not do us any harm to look at the place, anyway!"

"No, I suppose not," Katherine remarked, a little doubtfully, for a presentiment of coming evil had cast its weight upon her.

"You will find that it is a very nice place indeed, kept by an old Englishman, and his wife and daughters do the cooking. There isn't any style about the place, but it is thoroughly respectable, and for chops, steaks, oysters and old English ale, there is no better restaurant in the city."

It did not take the three long to reach the place, and the girls found that it was exactly as the gentleman represented.

The ladies' dining-room was on the second floor, and a rosy-cheeked English girl, one of the landlord's daughters, waited upon the party.

As Lemountain had predicted the dining-room was deserted, and they had the apartment to themselves.

All preferred oysters, and after they were ordered, the broker asked what kind of wine they would take.

"Oh, no, we don't want any wine at all! It is too rich for our blood!" Miss Percival declared, with a saucy toss of her head. "A glass of that good old English ale that you spoke of will suit us a deal better, eh, Katherine?"

"Yes, although, really, I do not care about any thing to drink, for I am not fond of anything of the kind."

"Well, a glass of ale will not do you any harm," the gentleman observed, and so the ale was ordered for the ladies, while Lemountain required brandy and soda.

"That is the favorite English drink," he remarked. "And, to my thinking, there isn't anything like it to quiet a man's nerves. Now, I feel all unstrung to-night, for I have had a hard siege of it."

"Is that so?" Miss Percival asked, for the purpose of being sociable.

"Yes, I have been about as near the brink of ruin as a man could be and yet escape to tell the tale."

"Dear me! well, it is lucky that you escaped," the English girl declared, perceiving that Katherine was not inclined to speak, for she sat staring at the young man with her great, black eyes in an extremely strange way.

"Yes, and it is all my own fault, too!" the gentleman exclaimed. "I cannot blame any one for it but myself. I am in Wall street, ladies, and instead of attending to my regular business, which pays me handsomely, I have neglected it to indulge in outside operations, and then, not content with that—not content with throwing away my money in the daytime, I must go and gamble more away at night, burning the candle at both ends, you see, in an extremely rapid manner."

"Well, if you will excuse me for saying it, I will remark that I think you have acted extremely foolish," the English girl observed. "And then to gamble, too, is perfectly horrid. I have known ever so many nice men to be ruined in that way."

"That is very true; it is the open-handed, liberal fellow—the man of talent and genius, who goes down to destruction in that way; your mean, miserly cad—your commonplace fellow, never gets caught in such a trap."

"Oh, how true that is!" Miss Percival exclaimed. "It is the splendid fellows who always fall into such pits."

"Well, I have come to the end of my path in that direction, and I am going to right-about face!" Lemountain declared.

"In the future I am going to be as steady as any church-goers in the land. I will not gamble any more; I will attend to my business as closely as any man in the city; and another thing—I want to give you fair warning, Miss Merrygold—from this time forth I am going to make love to you in the most desperate manner."

Full of banter was his tone, yet Katherine seemed visibly troubled, but Miss Percival laughed outright.

"Well, well, there isn't anything like giving a lady fair warning that you are going to lay siege to her!" she declared.

"Now, ladies, really, I am not joking, but in sober earnest!" Lemountain declared. "I do not hesitate to speak before you, Miss Percival, for you are going to be her room-mate, and I have a thought that you will prove to be a true

Joe Phenix's Shadow.

friend to her, so I do not hesitate to let you see how I feel about this matter. Miss Merrygold will tell you that during our acquaintanceship I have never acted toward her like a lover, and I give you my word frankly that I have fought with all my strength against yielding to this strange feeling which has taken possession of me."

Miss Percival stared at this explanation, but the other girl sat as rigid as a statue, yet her great black eyes seemed to be fairly blazing with strange fires.

"I cannot exactly explain what this feeling is, but it seems to draw me irresistibly to her, as it has done ever since the night when I first saw her on the stage at the Paragon Theater.

"There were plenty of girls there, fully as pretty, if not more attractive, than Miss Katherine here, but as I sat in front that night, I had eyes only for her, and all else on the stage seemed to be a blank."

"When I am down-town during the day attending to my business, the spell does not seem to be on me, but just so sure as the time comes when I first beheld her on the stage, then a wild impulse rises in my heart to be near her, and I know no peace until I can look upon her face."

"Now, Miss Katherine, I want to know what you mean by magnetizing me in this way?"

The question was put in jest, but Katherine's answer was sober enough.

"I do not know—I cannot understand it!" she exclaimed. "Pray Heaven that it does not bring ruin to both of us."

"Nonsense! it will bring happiness to us, I am sure!" he cried, gayly. "I am going to court you in the old, time-honored fashion, and one of these days, after you have had plenty of time to see just what kind of a fellow I am, perhaps you will come to the conclusion that you can be happy as my wife; I am sure that I will be as your husband, for your presence seems to inspire me as a draught of wine would a fainting man."

"When I came in here with you to-night, I felt dull and utterly discouraged. In fact, I was in the condition of a man who did not care whether he lived or died, but all that has passed away—all the gloom has vanished, and the future looks bright indeed. It is just as if you had lifted a weight from my soul."

"There is a compliment for you, Katherine!" Miss Percival exclaimed.

"Possibly I have assumed some burden that you have been carrying," the pale-faced girl observed. "It is strange, but I have been getting more and more gloomy as you seem to get more cheerful."

"Here's the refreshments; that will liven you up," Polly declared.

But they did not, and it was with a heavy heart indeed that Katherine sought her pillow that night, and all of Polly's kisses and caresses could not drive the dark shadow away. She was awake for hours after her companion was sound in slumber's chain.

CHAPTER IX.

COMPLETELY BAFFLED.

Two weeks have passed away since the night when the old Jew was found murdered in the Park—since the stormy interview between the bank magnate and the young Wall street broker, and the little supper at which young Lemountain declared his love for the ballet girl.

Some important things had happened during that time.

The firm of Briggs and Lemountain did not "go under," as their Wall street friends had confidently predicted.

There was no doubt that the junior member of the firm had been heavily hit, and even the jovial George Washington Briggs, who always declared that his motto was "never say die!" no matter how bad the circumstances were, had become gloomy on the morning of the eventful day, when the crash was expected to take place, and confided to some of his intimate friends that it was his opinion that his partner had made a large and glittering ass of himself.

He furthermore said that he had warned young Lemountain that he would come to grief, and that it was of no use for any of the youngsters to attempt to get the best of the old hands, who understood how to "stock the cards" and were certain to ring in a "cold deal" on the street when lambs enough had been enticed into the shambles to make it worth their while to show their power.

One fact hampered the genial George Washington in his remonstrances, his partner had contributed all the money.

"My experience, his money," G. W. B. said in his blithe and jocund way. "Now it ought to be my money and his experience, but it isn't, worse luck! We will both go broke together in the finest manner possible!"

But the wisest of prophets miss their calculations sometimes, and the men who predict the future in Wall street make as many mistakes as

the learned men who try their hands on the weather question.

The firm of Briggs and Lemountain did not fail, but met every liability promptly and paid dollar for dollar.

The magnates of the street, who had engineered the "corner" in which Lemountain with fifty more had been caught, were astounded, and the only conclusion to which they could come was that Lemountain had a great deal more money than any one had given him credit for possessing.

The most astonished man of the lot was the wily Jefferson Vanderhausen, president of the Grand Central National Bank, within whose palatial offices it was supposed the "corner" had been planned.

When the closing moment of the day's business came, and the young man, whom the president had deputed to look into the affair, reported that the house of Briggs and Lemountain had met every demand, paying cash on the nail, and never even suggesting such a thing as an extension of time on their paper, the sagacious financier was bewildered.

"How on earth did the fellow manage to raise the money?" he exclaimed, when the messenger departed, and he was alone in his private office.

"By Jove, this affair will give the fellow an enormous lift; his credit now will be A No. 1. Hang it all! I never was so much disappointed in my life! I got up this thing for the express purpose of catching him in a trap, so as to get him in a position where I would be able to dictate terms to him, and now the rascal has not only managed to escape, but has made reputation out of the affair.

"Where did he get the money?"

And then to the mind of the banker came the remembrance of the open safe.

"Can it be possible that there were any valuable papers—bonds, stocks, or anything of that sort in the safe upon which money could be raised, and the fellow contrived to get at them, during my brief absence from the room?" he muttered, with a moody brow.

"The rascal is none too good to do such a thing, with ruin staring him in the face," he continued. "Could it be possible that at the very moment he, practically, defied me to do my worst, he had valuable property of mine in his possession, upon which he knew he could raise money enough to see him through? That would be a deuce of a joke on me, if it is true. Use my money to get out of the hole into which I had cast him! Add insult to injury."

Then the bank president was silent for a few moments, his brow wrinkled by thought.

"I do not understand it at all!" he cried, at last, jumping to his feet and pacing up and down the room, very much irritated, for he was not a man who was often baffled in a scheme of this kind.

"I cannot bring myself to believe that there were securities in the safe upon which he could raise any money!" he declared. "I am not in the habit of keeping anything of the kind there."

"True, on two or three occasions, when I have done a bit of business at one of the up-town hotels, to oblige a customer, I have placed valuable papers in the safe, so as to keep them over night, but then the next morning I invariably brought them down-town with me."

"Can it be that on some occasion I have allowed a matter of this kind to slip my memory, and did not take the documents away in the morning?"

"It does not seem possible that I could have done anything so foolish! Still, careful business men—men fully as careful as I am, have been known to do just such stupid things."

"I will consult a detective at once upon the matter. That man Phenix did some clever work for us once, and impressed me at the time as being a wonderfully smart fellow. His office is somewhere in the neighborhood, I believe, and I will ask his advice upon this matter without delay."

He sent for the special officer attached to the bank, and from him learned Joe Phenix's address.

His coupe was at the door, and soon he was in the presence of the detective.

"This is a peculiar family matter," he began, "a delicate subject; but I believe, from what I know of you, that any confidence that I may favor you with will be as sacred as though intrusted to a lawyer or doctor, those twin confidants of family secrets."

"Yes, sir, that is the truth, and in any delicate family matter a half-confidence would not be apt to give material enough for a man to go on to accomplish effectual work."

"That certainly seems to be true, and so I shall speak freely."

And the banker was as good as his word. All that he kept back about the matter was the fact that he was the prime mover in getting up the combination in which the "shorts" of the street were caught.

"The safe episode is very strange," the detective observed, musingly. "A careful business man like yourself would not be apt to make any mistake about whether the safe door was open or not."

"No, I am positive that it was shut, but I am not so positive that at some time, when hurried by a press of business, I have not put some securities in the safe, then hurried down-town in the morning without them, and never gave the matter a second thought."

"That is possible, of course," Phenix remarked.

"Yes, it seems to be improbable, but I have known business men, just as careful as I am, to do just such stupid things," the banker said, candidly.

"How much money do you suppose Lemountain raised?"

"All the way from ten to twenty thousand dollars. Not less than ten, certainly."

"That is quite a large sum, and it would not be possible for him to raise it upon any securities without leaving traces so it can be ascertained whether he has done it or not," the detective observed, taking out his note-book and jotting down the facts in the case.

"Oh, no, such a thing as that cannot be worked in secret."

"A careful inquiry will doubtless reveal the truth. But to raise such a sum the securities would have to be first-class for him to get anything like the face value."

"Yes, I know that!" the bank president exclaimed.

"And that is just what bothers me! How can it be possible that I would forget all about ten or twenty thousand dollars' worth of gilt-edged securities, or thirty or forty thousand dollars' worth of common stock? The idea seems too monstrous to be entertained for a moment."

"It certainly does, yet, as you say, careful business men have been known to do such things," the detective observed.

"I will set an inquiry on foot among the banks, and bankers, in the morning, and this evening I will circulate around among the Wall street men in the up-town hotels. I am pretty well-known, for I do a good deal of Wall Street business, and so the gossips will not hesitate to talk to me. If Lemountain has raised any large sum of money to-day, some one of the brokers will be sure to know of it, for the gallant fight he made in this campaign, and his success, will be certain to be widely discussed."

"Yes, confound the fellow! if he has taken my money to do it with I will never forgive him, and though he is my brother-in-law, I will be hanged if I don't land him in State Prison!" the banker declared.

"It is a very mysterious affair!" Joe Phenix remarked. "The safe is incased in wood?"

"Yes, a house safe."

"And there is a spring lock on the outer door?"

"Yes, and the safe door is opened by a combination, as usual."

"Where do you carry the key of the outer door?"

"On my key-ring with the rest of my keys."

Vanderhausen drew it forth, and as he looked in the keys over an exclamation of surprise came from his lips.

"By Jove! the key is not here!"

"Gone?"

"Yes! Well, well, what does this mean?"

Then as he jingled the keys in his hand one of them slipped from the ring and fell to the floor.

"Hello! the ring has apparently sprung apart."

"It is one of the old-fashioned kind, and they are apt to give after long use. The key may be in your pocket?" the detective suggested.

The banker investigated, but the key was not there.

"When did you see it last?"

"Yesterday afternoon, when I got home to dinner, I unlocked the door with it so as to put a paper away."

"You are sure of this?"

"Yes, certain, and after I unlocked the door I replaced the keys in my pocket, for I did not need to lock the door again, as it is a spring-lock."

"The key may have dropped then—do you think you would have noticed it?"

"I do not hardly believe that I would," Vanderhausen replied, after thinking over the matter for a moment. "I was late and in a hurry to get down to my dinner."

"We can go on the idea that the key was dropped then, and perceived by Lemountain during your absence from the room. But now, how about the combination lock? If he had the key he could easily open the first door, but how about the second? Are you certain that you closed the door of the safe and the combination?"

"Yes, positive!" Vanderhausen declared. "To an old business man like myself such a thing becomes like a second nature—mechanical, as it were."

"I see," and then the detective meditated over the matter for a moment.

"Is the secret of the combination known to anybody but yourself?" Joe Phenix asked.

"Not to a soul!"

"Not even to your wife?" the detective asked in a careless way.

"Bless my soul, no!" exclaimed the banker,

surprised by the question. "Mrs. Vanderhausen knows nothing about business, and never troubles her head about any such matters. If she had been anything of a business woman she would have detected that her precious brother was a scamp a long time ago."

"Well, I think, Mr. Vanderhausen, that you had better drive me up to your house and allow me to take a look at the safe and its surroundings," the detective said.

"Yes, that is a good idea! My carriage is at the door. You may be able to discover something which has escaped my observation, for I am not a veteran thief-taker, you know."

Half-an-hour later the pair entered the library at the banker's mansion, and about the first article that met Vanderhausen's eyes, as he led the way into the room, was the missing key lying upon the center-table.

"Well, well, upon my word!" he exclaimed, in amazement.

"The missing key?" the detective inquired, for the moment he saw the article he guessed the reason of the banker's exclamation.

"Yes, and I will soon find out how it came here!"

The servants were summoned.

Inquiry revealed the fact that the housemaid had found the key under the center table when she swept the room that morning, and thinking that it was Mr. Vanderhausen's had placed it on the table so he would see it when he came in.

"Well, I am quite positive that I did not drop the key so it could get under the table!" the banker declared, after the door was closed behind the servants.

"If I dropped it at all, it was after I unlocked the safe and returned the key-ring to my pocket, for that was the only time that I had the keys out while I was in the room."

"If he used the key he probably found it by the safe, and then after using it, threw it under the table so that you would not be apt to see it, and have your suspicions excited until he was safe out of the house," the detective remarked.

"It certainly does look as if the matter was arranged in that way."

Then the detective proceeded to make a careful examination of the safe.

"You see, the combination works all right; it has not been tampered with," Vanderhausen remarked, as he opened the safe.

"Yes, the lock is all right; there are no marks to show that any instrument has been used upon it. If the safe has been opened it was by some one in possession of the combination."

"But think how improbable it is that any one, ignorant of the arrangement, should be able to get at it, and then too, I was not out of the room for over ten minutes."

"Mr. Vanderhausen, I must admit to you that the affair is a complete mystery to me," Joe Phenix said. "I am just as much in the dark as you are, and I cannot see a single clew."

"Oh, well, of course, this is right in the beginning," the banker observed. "We ought not to expect to catch our man at the first trial."

"Very true."

"Go ahead, and do the best you can; draw on me if you need funds, and spare neither pains or expense to sift this matter to the bottom! I would willingly pay a thousand dollars to know the truth! If Lemountain has robbed me it will be the worst hour's work in his life; if I am wronging him by my suspicions, I shall be extremely glad to learn it, for it will take a heavy weight from my mind."

The detective replied that he fully comprehended how the banker felt about the matter, and he would do all in his power to ascertain the truth, then he took his departure.

That evening he joined the brokers in their up-town resorts.

Joe Phenix was well known, popular, and so the men of the "street" did not hesitate to talk freely before him.

As he anticipated, the bold fight that the firm of Briggs and Lemountain had made was the general topic of conversation, and he found that it was a source of wonderment to all as to where the money had come from, but the most of the brokers were of the opinion that Lemountain had not run through all his money, as the world supposed, but had put away a considerable sum as a nest-egg, and it was this money that had pulled him through.

Then it was whispered in a quiet way that it was possible that his sister, Mrs. Vanderhausen, had come to his aid.

These wily financiers shrewdly conjectured that the banker himself would not advance Lemountain money, for it was an open secret on the "street" that it was Vanderhausen who had engineered the "corner."

Not a single hint did the detective hear that the broker had raised money on any securities.

The next day, Joe Phenix pursued his investigation in Wall street, and was not able to learn any more there than he had in the up-town hotels.

For three days, with the patience of a bloodhound upon the trail, he stuck to the work, but

at the end of that time was obliged to tell the banker that he was completely baffled.

"Consider yourself still retained on the case and keep your eyes open," Vanderhausen said. "I am determined to learn the truth if it takes years and costs a fortune!"

While busily employed on the banker's business Joe Phenix had not neglected the murder case.

His mornings he devoted to Wall street, his afternoons and evenings to learning all he could about the customers who had secret dealings with the diamond-broker, he having taken a list of them from the books.

But it seemed as if the able detective was in for a run of ill-luck, for not a single suspicious circumstance could he discover in relation to any one of them.

And so two weeks passed away, and at the end of that time Joe Phenix was obliged to confess that he was no nearer to the heart of the great mystery than he had been when the case first came to his knowledge.

"Too bad, too bad!" he muttered. "Two difficult cases, and I, with all my boasted skill, cannot do anything with either one of them!"

CHAPTER X.

THE CLAIRVOYANT.

DURING the two weeks Joe Phenix had done a little shadowing, on the quiet, of the broker, Lemountain, with the idea of finding out just what kind of a man he was.

He did not attempt to persistently dog the man's footsteps, for as soon as he began the game he discovered that the broker was evidently suspicious, and on the alert.

"This comes from the banker telling him that there had been a spy on his track," Phenix muttered as soon as he discovered that Lemountain had an idea he was being watched.

It was not a difficult matter for a detective of Joe Phenix's ability to find out about the habits of such a man as the young broker without allowing him to discover that he was being spied upon.

The detective soon found out the attraction which drew him so often to the Paragon Theater, and then made the discovery that the young man was keeping two sets of apartments.

Up-town, in one of the palatial houses built especially to accommodate the gilded youth of the metropolis with superb bachelor's quarters, Lemountain had a fine set of rooms, and then he had a single apartment in the house of the old stage-doorkeeper, which, by the way, was situated on the lower side of Washington Square, one of the old-time mansions, where the nabobs of New York had once dwelt.

Of course, Joe Phenix quickly conjectured that the young man had taken the room in order to be near the dancing-girl, and as there were other rooms in the house to let, the detective took one, thinking that it would be well to be near his game.

He was not personally known to Lemountain, and so had no fears of being recognized.

"It is strange that I should by chance be brought into the neighborhood where the old Jew was murdered," he muttered, as he looked out of his window—he had an upper front bedroom—on the Park, and his eyes rested on the bench where the dead man was found.

"The Park yonder holds the secret of the crime—shall I ever get a clew?"

The man-hunter had taken his room on a Saturday night, and it was on Sunday, about one o'clock, that he sat by his window and looked out upon the Square.

The detective had not allowed himself to become discouraged yet.

It was natural for the assassin to keep quiet until the hue and cry had quieted down a little, then he might make some move which would give the bloodhound a chance to get on his trail.

Perceiving that it was time for lunch the detective sallied forth and proceeded to Broadway; as he turned into that thoroughfare he came face-to-face with a jolly-looking gentleman whose long, brown beard and peculiar eyeglasses gave him a foreign appearance.

"Why, if it isn't Mr. Phenix?" the stranger exclaimed, advancing with outstretched hand.

Joe Phenix shook hands with the other and remarked that he was glad to see him.

"You remember me, eh?"

"Oh, yes, although you have grown a beard and look more like a German than an American."

"Don't look much like the Doctor Jim Brown whom you saved from going to Sing Sing ten years ago, eh? And, egad! my dear Phenix I should probably be there at this present moment if it was not for you!"

"Well, I felt satisfied that you were an innocent man, and I succeeded in proving it."

"Yes, and my ass of a lawyer would not believe me when I told him I was not the man, and advised me to plead guilty so as to get a light sentence."

"Lawyers are only men and often make mistakes."

"Are you at liberty—will you come and dine with me? I am out on the loose to-day; my better half has gone to dinner with her mother,

and as I don't admire her, I begged off, saying I was going to dine at a hotel with a friend. That was a fib of course, but now I will make it the truth if you will join me."

"I shall be pleased, of course."

"We will take in Delmonico's. I am quite a swell now, my dear Phenix, altogether a different man from what I was when you got me out of my trouble; but during the meal, with a bottle of good wine to wash the cobwebs out of our throats, I will tell you all about it!"

So off to the famous eating-house of the metropolis the brown-bearded stranger carried the detective.

When they arrived there the gentleman took a private room and ordered an elaborate dinner.

"I say, ain't you going in a little extravagantly?" Joe Phenix asked. "I am a plain man, you know, and don't make a practice of dining like a duke."

"My dear Mr. Phenix, you really must allow me to arrange the spread," the other exclaimed, with a dignified wave of his fat hand, upon the little finger of which sparkled a diamond which had never cost less than five hundred dollars."

"All right—go ahead!"

"If you remember at the time of our last meeting, I was in pretty poor circumstances, and so I was not able to pay you anything for the service you rendered me."

"I did not want anything. I was a regular detective then, attached to the city force, and it was my duty to discover criminals, and in putting the right man in the place of a wrong one, I was simply doing my duty."

"Ah! but you did it in a noble way. Not one detective out of ten thousand would have taken the trouble that you did, and I will never forget it, Mr. Phenix, while I live!"

"Don't allow any sense of obligation to weigh you down," Joe Phenix declared, with a smile. "If there was a debt, you must remember that it was outlawed long ago."

"Ah, my dear sir, such debts are never outlawed—they last while memory holds a seat in the distracted brain!"

"Here is the potage; will you do me the honor to try a glass of Sauterne with me?"

And as they ate and drank the conversation proceeded.

"You remember how I was situated," the host remarked. "A poor, struggling doctor, with a large family and very little practice, and when, through a case of mistaken identity, I was arrested and thrown into jail I was completely broken up, to use the slang."

"You got me out; my practice was gone, and what to do I knew not, when I happened to see an advertisement in a newspaper for a doctor to travel. I knew it was some humbug, but I was desperate. It was a clairvoyant physician, who wanted a regular one to go along with him to write the prescriptions, which were too much for him.

"Now, I had always considered the clairvoyants to be a lot of impudent frauds, but after I had been with this old man a while, I began to see that there was something in it, for he was able to tell utter strangers to him things about their lives which it was not possible for him to have known; but as a doctor he was an out-and-out fraud."

"Then came the strangest thing of all. We came to New York, and the discovery was made that my wife was a clairvoyant—you remember her—a little, nervous woman, always on pins and needles?"

The detective nodded.

"Well, sir, she could beat the doctor all to pieces at his own game, for she was quick, while he was slow, and he was obliged to admit that she was the finest 'subject' that he had ever seen."

"I suppose that after that discovery you had very little use for the doctor?" Joe Phenix observed.

"You are right; we pitched in to do the little game on our own hook, but I had been with the old fellow long enough to see that people liked to be humbugged—Barnum made that discovery, and a fortune out of it, years ago, you know."

"It is true; always has been, and always will be, I presume, unless the world grows much wiser as it grows older."

"I knew that plain James and Betsy Brown would not strike the dear public as being the proper caper for the august seer and seeress, who, for one dollar a head—cash invariably in advance and no trust—would peer into the future and 'tell which seeds would grow and which would not,' so we re-baptized ourselves."

"I am Herr Professor Rudolphe Von Stein—no relation, however, to the fellow in the song who rode through the forest and drank the blood-red wine—and Mrs. Betsy Brown is transformed into Madam Kristina Von Stein, the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter!"

CHAPTER XI.

TESTING THE MEDIUM.

The detective laughed.

"It is amazing how people can be caught by such shallow tricks," he remarked.

"Oh, come, now, you mustn't be too severe," the professor observed. "There is really something in clairvoyance."

"Yes, I am aware of that, but there isn't half in it that people believe."

"That's very true, but you see we humans are unreasonable; we expect too much. But as far as the science goes, I must say that I admire it immensely," and the other winked at the detective over the top of his wine glass.

"Speak well of the bridge that carries you over, eh?" suggested Phenix in his dry way.

"I should be very foolish if I didn't. But, really, the madam and myself do honestly try to give full value for the money, not like the ignorant pretenders who simply fleece their patrons out of their money."

"We pretend to do a little doctoring by means of clairvoyance, and that, between you and me, is the biggest kind of a humbug; but as I am a pretty good doctor in the old-fashioned way, I put the patient through a cross-examination before the party is admitted to see the madam. I do this in a friendly talk, pretending to take a great interest in the patient, and there isn't one out of a thousand who will not tell me all the symptoms, just as they would tell them to a regular physician."

"Yes, I see; and I suppose that it is rare that the party suspects that a pumping operation has been going on?"

"No, for they haven't any idea that anything of the kind will be attempted. That is not the popular idea of a clairvoyant doctor at all. The notion is that the clairvoyant is like a magician and can tell what the matter is with a patient by looking at him."

"Yes; they come with a belief in supernatural powers, or else they would not come at all."

"Exactly, it is superstition. Well, after I get all the facts I want, I introduce the patient to the madam, and she goes through the regular performance—tells the party so many things that they did not expect to hear, that when the seance is over, and I prescribe the medicine for the disease, which my cross-examination has led me to believe is the trouble with the patient, they depart, feeling satisfied that they have gone through a wonderful experience, which in truth they have, and that my prescription will be sure to cure, and that goes a long way, you know; any honest doctor will tell you that faith in the ability of the doctor is half the battle."

"No doubt about that."

"Now, I have revealed to you 'the secrets of my prison house,' and I rely upon you not to give them away."

"Oh, no, you can depend upon me."

"We are just coining money, taking in from ten to thirty dollars a day, and mind, by this ingenious system of mine of mixing clairvoyance and medicine, a trick which I learned from the old doctor, by the way, we have managed to make some wonderful cures."

"Faith, superstition and medicine combined."

"You have hit it! And I tell you, my dear friend, we have had the luck to cure some cases which some of the best doctors in New York have given up in despair."

"I do not doubt that the medical fraternity are down on you."

"Oh, yes, but as I am a regular physician they cannot do anything but growl and cry quack, quack! as loud as they can, but I only laugh at them 'as the dollars come tumbling in.'"

"Well, I am glad to know that you are prospering, and I do not doubt that you do your patients fully as much good as though they patronized a regular doctor."

"Yes, more, for though it is against the rules to tell tales out of school, yet I don't mind saying to a man like yourself that just about one half the doctors in New York, and elsewhere too, for that matter, ought to be clerking behind a counter, or mending shoes."

"Ah, that is professional jealousy, I fear!"

"Oh, no, it is the truth. But I say, you must come and see the madam sometime. She will be delighted to see you! She looks upon you as a sort of a guardian angel, you know, and she has often said to me: 'Oh, James, where would we have been, and what would have become of us if it hadn't been for Mr. Phenix?'"

"I shall be pleased to see her, I am sure."

"And I say, did you ever look into this clairvoyance business at all?"

"Yes, a little."

"Well, it ought to be interesting to a man like yourself. It is a very incomprehensible thing; here I have been hammering away at it for ten years now, and, I declare, I do not believe that I know much more about it than when I began!"

"I regard it as one of those phenomena which set at naught the wit of man."

"Exactly! 'There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamed of in your philosophy!'" the doctor quoted. He was rather inclined to be theatrical, the effect of the peculiar life he led, no doubt.

In order to catch the multitude it was necessary to assume a character, just as if he was an actor.

"Come and test the madam's skill some time. You will find it extremely interesting, I am sure," and then he continued, as an idea came to him: "Come some time when you have a difficult case on hand—one that is bothering you, you know;

a case where you are completely at fault and cannot discover a clew, come to the madam—the original Jacob—don't go to the other swindle across the way—and see if clairvoyance cannot help you out!"

A grave look appeared on the face of the detective. Like the most of men who lead or have led, a life of adventure he was a firm believer in luck.

He fully recognized that in some of the marvelous feats which he had performed his success was almost entirely due to the fact that fortune favored him at a critical moment.

And now he asked himself if the blind goddess was not smiling upon him again when she brought about this meeting with the clairvoyant.

"It is rather odd," the detective said, "at the present moment I have two cases in hand and in neither one can I make a move, my way being completely blocked."

"My dear Mr. Phenix, come right up and see the madam this afternoon! She is to be home at three o'clock, and though we do not do any business on Sunday, except in urgent cases, we will make an exception in your favor."

The proposal jumped with the humor of the detective.

"Very well, I will be glad to go with you, although I warn you, right at the beginning, that I have very little faith in clairvoyance being able to help me out of my puzzle."

"My dear Mr. Phenix, you don't know what clairvoyance will do—mesmerism is one of those mysterious things which no mortal as yet has ever begun to understand. I have been at it ten years, about, and, as I told you, I am sadly puzzled at times. But whether we succeed or not it will be no harm to try."

"That is true, and I will go with you."

Then the conversation branched off, and different matters were discussed, none of which are of any interest to the reader.

Three o'clock soon came and the two started for the home of the professor.

He had a handsome flat on Thirtieth street, fitted up in elegant style.

The madam was as delighted to see the detective as her husband had been.

She was a little, slender woman, with a thin face and a rather wild look; it was plain, as the professor expressed it, that she was one bunch of nerves.

When she learned what the detective came for, she expressed her satisfaction at being able to oblige him.

"Come into the consultation-room," said the professor, and then the three went into the small apartment, the walls of which were hung with black velvet, after the style of the old-fashioned tapestry hangings.

Carpet and ceiling was of the same sable hue; there were no windows in the room, and light was afforded by a peculiar sort of a ground-glass globe which was affixed to the ceiling in the exact center of the apartment.

There was evidently a gas-jet behind this globe, but it could not be seen and the "dim, religious light" illuminated the apartment in an extremely effective way.

There was an odd-shaped Turkish easy-chair in the center of the room, so arranged that the rays of light would fall with a ghostly effect upon the person who sat therein, and Phenix conjectured that this was the throne of the oracle.

A little way from the chair were two Turkish stools, covered with black velvet, as were the chairs, and in a corner was a large screen, also a somber black.

"This is a sort of a chamber of horrors, and I presume you can imagine how much more effective the words of the seeress are, delivered in such an uncanny apartment as this, than if they were uttered in a plain every-day parlor," the professor remarked.

"Oh, yes, no doubt about that," Joe Phenix replied.

The madam seated herself in the large chair, the professor motioned to the detective to take one of the stools, and as he did so the professor produced a peculiar copper piece about as big as an old-fashioned cent, with a bit of dull crystal in its center.

He placed this upon the palm of his wife's right hand, which she placed upon her lap; then she commenced to stare at it with a fixed, peculiar gaze, and as she did so, the professor began his magnetic passes with his hands.

Slowly, little by little, the woman's face seemed to become rigid, the eyes closed, and then the head sunk back against the cushions.

"She is in the magnetic trance," the professor announced. "Shall I question her for you?"

"If you please."

"If I do not put the questions in a manner to suit you, suggest how you want them."

"Very well."

"Of course, I shall not come any tom-foolery business with you," the professor remarked. "You are here after information, and I am going to try to give it to you."

"And I hope you will succeed," but there was a touch of doubt in the voice of the detective as he spoke.

"Our friend here is puzzled," the professor said.

Quick as a flash came the reply from the clairvoyant:

"Yes, two cases; one of them I do not think I can do anything with—the safe case. I can see the safe plainly enough, and the figure of a tall, stern-looking man—a lion of a man, but nothing else. All is dark and confused."

Joe Phenix was not astonished at this, for he had before tested the power of the disciples of the Frenchman, Mesmer, the discoverer—or the first to use, this wonderful force.

"Never mind the safe case; try the other."

"I see an old man, a Jew; he is walking briskly through a park—it is night and quite dark; he is stopped by a person who speaks to him."

"Can you describe the person?" the professor asked.

"No, I cannot."

"Man or woman?"

"It is not possible for me to tell—there is a cloud around the person."

"The Jew is stopped by this party?"

"Yes."

"What then?"

"Oh, horrible! I see the flash of a dagger in the air—the old man is stabbed to the heart by the stranger, and sinks upon a bench. The other bends over and seems to take something from his breast-pocket, but there is such a shadow surrounding the two that I cannot see clearly."

The professor looked annoyed.

"Try and see if you cannot distinguish what the party did, and whether the murderer is a man or woman."

"It is not possible; the shadows are too dark," the medium replied, without hesitation.

"I suppose you know what case this is?" the detective remarked at this point.

"Oh, yes, I should be very dull indeed not to guess, considering the row that the newspapers kicked up about the matter," the professor replied.

"You are after the murderer of Abraham Rosengelt?"

"Yes, and that is one of the cases in which I am not able to make any headway."

"Well, I will admit that I'm a little disappointed about the matter, for I fancied the madam would be able to do something for you," the other observed.

"One thing I will say, though, there isn't any humbug about this matter, the madam has told you something about an affair of which she knows absolutely nothing, for she never reads a newspaper, and as she is so nervous, and has such a horror of violence, I never converse with her about any crimes of this kind."

"Oh, I comprehend that there is no understanding between you and your wife—that you have not conveyed to her by any underhand means a knowledge of the quest upon which I came."

"Of course, I could not, for I was not aware of the particular case upon which you were engaged. True, I might have got at the truth by a shrewd guess, but I give you my word that I never troubled my head about it."

"I do not doubt it," Joe Phenix observed.

"As I told you, right at the beginning, I have no faith at all in being able to solve any hidden mystery by the aid of clairvoyance. I looked into the so-called science some years ago, and about all there is to it, as far as I could discover, was that certain people, of peculiar temperament, could be cast into a magnetic trance, and while in that state they possessed the power of being able, to a limited extent, of reading the thoughts of those around them, so that it was possible for them to tell of things which were only known to the persons present, that is, they could tell the questioner which he himself knew, but nothing beyond that."

"Now in this test your wife has told me just what I know about this murder case. I know that the Jew entered the Park and was accosted there by some one, but whether that party was man or woman, I know not, and that is the reason why your wife says that shadows obscure her vision. She can only tell me what I know, beyond that her skill, and your art is powerless."

The professor shook his head; it was plain that he did not like this matter-of-fact way of disposing of the mysterious science of clairvoyance.

"Mr. Phenix, don't you think that that assertion is a little too sweeping?" he asked. "Surely there is more than that in clairvoyance!"

"If there is I have never been able to discover it," the detective replied, in his quiet, but positive way. "But I will tell you what I will do, Herr Professor, if you think that there is more in clairvoyance than I am willing to allow. I have been offered twenty thousand dollars by the son of the murdered man to find the assassin. Now, if by your clairvoyance you are able to put me on the right track I will be glad to pay a liberal share of the reward."

"All right; I will try for it!" the other declared.

Then he released his wife from the trance, and

was obliged to confess to her, when she asked about the matter, that no information had been obtained.

CHAPTER XII. PHENIX IS ASTONISHED.

THE doctor's wife expressed her surprise that the seance had not been productive of any important results, and the acute detective comprehended that the lady had the fullest confidence in her power to look into the future.

Phenix staid to supper with the pair and then departed.

The professor accompanied him to the door.

"Really, Mr. Phenix, you are wrong about clairvoyance!" he declared. "There is more in the science than you are willing to admit."

"You believe then that it is possible for your wife to look into the future?" the detective asked.

"Yes, under certain conditions, I do not think there is any doubt of it. Of course, there is a vast difference in people. Now I can see that you are a difficult subject to operate upon."

"Yes, I have been told that before by clairvoyants and spiritualists who were not able to astonish me by their power to read the future. In fact, all my experiments in this particular line have been gigantic failures; in no one instance have I ever succeeded in gaining any information that was of the slightest value to me, and all of the mediums tried to excuse their failure by declaring that I was the hardest kind of a subject," Phenix remarked in his dry way.

"I do not doubt that that is the truth; you are a very uncommon man, you know, but I am positive that there is more in clairvoyance than you are willing to admit, and I shall set to work to see if I cannot secure a share of this twenty thousand dollars that you mentioned."

"I shall be very glad indeed to pay you a good big slice of the reward, but I am afraid it will be a long time before you claim the money.

"The last clairvoyant was very indignant because I doubted her mystic powers, and I suggested to her that if she really could read the future, as she declared, that it was foolish in her to continue to make a living by clairvoyance when by using her powers she could easily discover what number would win the capital prize in the next lottery and so secure a hundred thousand dollars without any trouble."

The professor laughed. He saw that the other had the best of the situation.

"Your argument is a strong one and I shall not attempt to dispute with you, but there is more in clairvoyance than simple mind-reading, and one of these days when some genius masters the subject the world will be astonished."

"That may be so, but at the present time the science is in a bad way, for two-thirds of the prophets are frauds of the first water."

"That is true beyond a doubt, and it is such people who keep back the development of the science."

Then the two men shook hands and Phenix went on his way.

By this time the shades of night had descended upon the city.

The detective walked along, busy in thought, paying but little attention to which way he was going; and almost before he knew it he found himself in Washington Square.

"It is odd my coming here," he murmured as he walked up to the bench upon which the body of the old Jew was found, and seated himself upon it.

"It really seemed as if some invisible power caused my footsteps to bend this way, but as I am not superstitious I cannot bring myself to believe that there is anything more in the matter than the chance of accident."

"And here on this spot the old Jew met his death," the detective continued, in a reflective way.

"He entered the Square by the southeast corner, and was crossing the Park, evidently intending to leave it by one of the northern passages.

"Where was he bound?"

And as he put the question, he stared into the gloom which enshrouded the northern part of the Square as though he expected that an answer to his question would come from out the darkness.

For fully five minutes Joe Phenix stared straight ahead into the dusk of the night, his brain busy in thought, and then he was suddenly roused from his abstraction by the sound of a gentle sigh.

Turning in some astonishment, for he had not been conscious that any one had approached, he was surprised to discover that a woman was sitting upon the other end of the bench.

She was slender in form, robed in complete black, and her face was so completely concealed by a dark veil that it was not possible for the detective to tell whether she was old or young.

It was somewhat of a mystery to Joe Phenix how it was that the woman had managed to approach the spot without his knowledge.

"I must have been away off in the clouds," he muttered to himself.

"I see him coming," the stranger said, abrupt-

ly, and she spoke in a strange, hollow, unnatural tone.

The detective looked at the woman; he comprehended that all was not right, yet for the moment he was unable to make up his mind about her.

She was dressed like a lady, and from her bearing seemed to be one. Her garb was not costly, yet it could not be said to indicate that she was poor, but she was so closely veiled that it was not possible for any one to make out whether her features were delicate or coarse.

"Excuse me, madam, did you speak?" asked the detective, whose curiosity had been excited.

"Yes, there is no doubt about it—he is coming," the veiled lady remarked, in a mechanical sort of way, and as near as Joe Phenix could make out she was looking toward the southeast corner of the Park.

The detective looked in that direction, but as there wasn't any one in sight he thought he must have made a mistake, so he cast his eyes around, but was not able to see a soul approaching from any point.

"What is the matter with the woman?" he muttered, when he made this discovery. "Is she a little cracked in the upper story? It would certainly seem so."

"What a shame—that old man, with his gray hairs, coming straight on to his death!" the woman exclaimed, in low, suppressed tones.

Despite all of Phenix's self-control he was so completely taken by surprise when this strange speech fell upon his ears that he could not help uttering a prolonged "Oh!"

That the woman referred to the murder of the old Jew he strongly suspected.

He was now well satisfied, too, that her wits were a little disordered, and he could not help thinking how strange it was that the chance of accident should bring him—the man-hunter who was in search of the murderer—in contact with a poor creature whose brains were not quite right, and who was brooding upon the tragedy.

He felt interested in the stranger, and a desire sprung up in his mind to know who and what she was.

"It was a fearful crime," he remarked. "I presume you are speaking of Mr. Rosengelt's death, and he was killed almost on this very spot?"

"Yes; was it not too dreadful?" the veiled woman said, in a mechanical sort of way, and looking straight ahead of her, paying no attention whatever to the detective. "And is it not horrible, too, that I should become acquainted with all the particulars of the bloody deed?"

This speech confirmed the detective in his belief that the speaker was one of those harmless "cranks," whose whim it was to identify themselves with the notable events of the day, so in order to humor and lead her on, that he might see just how much her mind was affected, Joe Phenix remarked:

"Yes, it is not pleasant to be acquainted with all the particulars of these awful crimes, although morbid-minded people seem to take a pleasure in such things; but if any one reads the newspapers, they cannot help learning all about these deeds of violence."

"I do not read the particulars of such dreadful crimes as this in the newspapers, for I take no interest in such horrible things," the woman observed.

"Have you conversed about the matter, then?" the detective asked, considerably puzzled by the stranger, for she spoke in a perfectly sensible way, excepting that her voice seemed hard and mechanical, and only her strange words gave any indication that she was not right in her mind.

"No, I would not talk about such a dreadful thing."

"But if you have not read anything about the matter, nor talked with any one concerning the affair, how comes it that you possess any knowledge of the murder?"

"Oh, I don't know—that is something that I cannot tell, and that is why I am worried about it," the woman replied, a note of despair plainly perceptible in her voice.

"That is very strange, indeed!" the detective exclaimed, more and more interested in the woman, for by this time he had come to the conclusion that she was young—in fact nothing more than a girl, and it seemed to be very odd that her mind should be affected in this peculiar way.

"Yes, it is all like a dream to me, but I know that it is reality, and yet I do not understand how it can be, either," and the speaker shook her head as though she was greatly puzzled.

"How can it be possible for me to know all about this horrible deed of blood?" she continued. "By what strange decree of fate am I gifted with a knowledge of all the particulars of the crime, so that I am as well acquainted with it as if I stood by and saw the murderous blow struck which stole away the life of the old man?"

This speech plainly indicated a disordered mind, and yet she spoke like one in full possession of all her senses, but the detective had some experience with cranks, and understood that

many lunatics, even when hopelessly mad, are able to converse in the most intelligent manner upon many subjects.

"It certainly is strange, but there must be a reason for it, of course," Joe Phenix observed, humoring the woman.

"It is dreadful, and if it keeps on I shall surely go crazy!" the other declared. "Why, just think! Night after night, in my sleep, the awful scene comes back to me. I can see the aged man entering the Park; he comes in at a brisk pace, as though he was in a hurry, and just as he reaches this spot he is stopped by a woman—Oh! how dreadful it is!" she exclaimed, bringing her speech to an abrupt end with a sigh which seemed to come from her very heart.

A strange suspicion suddenly flashed into the mind of the detective.

Could it be possible that he was now conversing with the assassin of Abraham Rosengelt?

Had the old Jew fallen by a woman's hand, the victim of a lunatic, or were there some secret passages in the life of the old man of which his family knew nothing?

"This recital of yours is very mysterious indeed," the detective observed, anxious to lead the woman to speak further. "I take considerable interest in this most strange murder case, and if you know more of the affair than has been given to the world at large through the columns of the newspapers I should be glad to hear the particulars."

"Why I know all about it," the other replied. "And I am willing to tell you, for it may help to take the weight off my mind."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE VAILED WOMAN'S STORY.

THE detective was actuated by two reasons in keeping up the conversation with the unknown.

It might be possible that she really did know something about the mysterious murder, and so he would be able to gain valuable information, his luck again aiding him more than all the shrewd suggestions to which his busy brain gave birth; or if she was merely a lunatic who believed she possessed knowledge which she did not, it would be interesting to ascertain her ideas on the subject.

"If the knowledge oppresses you it probably will give relief for you to confide it to some one," the detective remarked.

"Yes, it is like a sorrow which, cancer-like, cuts into the very heart," the veiled woman replied. "The knowledge sears my brain, and if I do not soon obtain relief I fear that I will go crazy."

"Speak then freely, and you can rest assured that you will find a most attentive listener in me, for I feel a great interest in this mysterious affair."

"I do not understand why I should take any interest in this matter at all," the woman began. "I did not know the old gentleman—did not know that any such man as he was existed, and why I should become involved in this horrible affair is a complete mystery to me."

"It does seem to be strange, but if you will relate all the particulars to me, perhaps I will be able to find an explanation," Joe Phenix observed.

"I suppose that you happened to be in the Square at the time the tragedy took place, and so witnessed the doing of the deed?"

"Oh, no, I never was here before in my life," the woman replied. "And I cannot explain how it was that I came to wander in here to-night, for I am sure that when I started out I had no intention of coming in here."

And as Joe Phenix listened to these words, the thought came to him that it was much the same way with himself, and he rather wondered at the coincidence.

"But if you were not in the Park at the time that the murder was committed, how does it happen that you know anything about the matter?"

"That is something that I cannot explain," the veiled woman replied, with a doubtful shake of the head. "And the more I reflect upon the matter, the greater becomes the puzzle."

This answer caused the detective to think that he was really wasting time in talking to the stranger, for her words appeared to imply that she was out of her mind.

But as he had made up his mind to learn what she thought about the matter, he proceeded to encourage her to go on.

"The ideas that you have on the subject must have come to you in some way!" the detective urged. "Can you not explain how you received them?"

"No, not clearly. All the particulars in regard to the tragedy seemed to have suddenly flashed upon my mind, just the same as though I had seen the horrible deed depicted upon the stage in a play."

"Ah, yes, I understand that, but what I do not understand is, how can it be possible you should know anything about the matter when you had never even heard of the affair?"

"I cannot tell you anything about it. All I

can say is that all the particulars of the horrid deed suddenly flashed upon me like a vision."

"Ah, yes," Joe Phenix remarked, his belief that the woman's mind was disordered strengthened by this unsatisfactory account. "Well, go on and tell me all you know about the matter."

"Yes, I will. I can see everything as distinctly as though the scene was now before my eyes!" the veiled woman declared.

"It is dark—just as it is now, only a light here and there, not strong enough to dispel the gloom."

"The old gentleman enters from the lower corner," and she nodded to the southeast. "He comes rapidly along to this bench, and here he is confronted by a tall, closely-veiled woman, dressed in dark clothes."

"She is no stranger to him, for he bows politely, and in a moment, without a word beyond the first salutation, the woman strikes him to the heart with a slender dagger which she had in her hand, hidden from view by the folds of her dress."

"The old man utters a single moan, clutches with his hands at his breast, as though he thought the dagger was still in the wound, and then drops dead upon the bench."

"With rapid motion the woman bends over him, opens his coat, and takes from his breast-pocket a large roll of bills; these she thrusts into her pocket, then hastens away."

The veiled woman had delivered the tale in a hard, mechanical way, and the detective, as he listened, was forcibly reminded of the madam from whose seance he had so recently come.

Then an idea flashed into Joe Phenix's mind.

Was there not a possibility that he had made a mistake in believing that this woman's mind was disordered?

The declaration of the professor came to him: "There is more in clairvoyance than you are willing to admit."

Had he stumbled upon a "medium," who had been placed in a trance by some one, and had been allowed to wander into the street still fast in her magnetic sleep? Was this medium so much better than the madam that she was able to give information which the other was not able to obtain?

This was a wild and visionary idea, and sober second thought suggested that it was much more likely the woman was mentally deranged than that she was a medium of wonderful powers.

But, just to satisfy his curiosity, he resolved to question this veiled woman just as the professor questioned his wife, going on the idea that she was a medium in a magnetic trance.

"Do you think you could follow the woman so as to tell me where she went?" he asked.

"Yes, I think so," the other replied, slowly.

"Well, try!"

"She crossed the Square, going to the north by the center path," and the woman, as she spoke, faced around so as to look in that direction.

"Yes, go on!" exclaimed Joe Phenix, deeply interested, despite the doubt that there was in his mind in regard to her sanity.

"She leaves the Park, crosses the street, and enters one of the houses on the opposite side of the street," the veiled woman continued.

The detective fixed his eyes upon the row of houses, from which the lights were brightly gleaming.

Could it be possible that the assassin of the old Jew was harbored in any one of those highly-respectable mansions?

"You have not made any mistake about this matter?"

"No; I can see her enter the house distinctly. There is a name-plate on the door."

"Can you see the name?" and Joe Phenix fixed his piercing gaze upon the distant row of houses, as though he believed that, notwithstanding the space, he could discern the name.

"Oh, yes, without any trouble. It is Vanderhausen!"

A long breath escaped from the lips of the detective, for his surprise was great.

Then suddenly the woman rose to her feet.

"Yes, I know you want me, and I am coming," she said, speaking as though she was addressing some one a little distance off, and then she hurried away, going toward Fourth street.

CHAPTER XIV.

AGAIN BAFFLED.

WITH all his shrewdness and experience Joe Phenix was puzzled.

It was extremely odd that the two cases upon which he had been employed at about the same time, and in neither of which had he been able to make any headway, should be brought together thus unexpectedly.

If there was any reliance to be placed in the words of this mysterious veiled woman, the murderer of Abraham Rosengelt went straight from the scene of the bloody deed to the house of the banker, Vanderhausen.

It seemed to be almost impossible that this could be true.

Much more likely was it that the idea was but the delusion of a disordered mind, but why had the unfortunate woman—if her brain was so affected—pitched upon the house of the banker?

It was not possible from the spot where they were to distinguish that any of the houses had a door-plate, much less read a name inscribed upon it, so it was apparent that either the woman knew that Vanderhausen lived where he did, or else she possessed the clairvoyant's skill and was able to tell of things of which she herself had no knowledge.

But if this was true there was one strange fact about the matter.

The madam, like all the rest of the clairvoyants, could only tell him what he already knew, but this woman, by tracing the murderer of the old Jew to the house of the banker, had not certainly told him something which he did not expect to hear, and of which he had no knowledge, for no suspicion that any of Banker Vanderhausen's household had aught to do with the killing of Rosengelt had ever entered his mind, and now despite the statement of the unknown, the idea seemed to be too wild and visionary for him to give it any credence.

The more likely explanation of the matter was that the woman was acquainted with the banker, and with that strange perversity common to those whose minds are affected, associated an inmate of his house with the tragedy in the Park.

These reflections passed rapidly through the mind of the detective, and the woman in the meanwhile had traversed a couple of hundred feet, gliding on with a peculiarly graceful motion.

"I think I will have to follow you, so as to see where you are going," Joe Phenix remarked, rising as he spoke, and then he proceeded after the veiled lady.

By the time that she had reached the border of the Square the detective saw that he had not undertaken a difficult task, for the woman went straight on, never taking the trouble to look behind her, apparently not caring in the least whether she was followed or not.

After leaving the Park she crossed to the opposite side of the street and, turning, walked on with a rapid gait.

Joe Phenix came along leisurely in the rear so that when the veiled lady reached the corner he was four or five hundred feet behind.

She turned the corner, and when the detective arrived at that point he followed her example.

A surprise awaited him.

The woman had disappeared!

"Hello! what does this mean?" he exclaimed, perplexed by this unexpected development.

Hesitating upon the corner he looked around. There was light enough to enable him to see for a thousand feet or more distinctly, and it was clearly not possible for the woman to have got so far away as to be out of sight, even if she had taken to her heels and ran at her best speed after turning the corner, but Joe Phenix did not believe that she had done anything of the kind, for she had not proceeded as though she feared being followed.

The only explanation of the riddle was that she had gone into some one of the houses.

The corner house fronted on the square and had a yard back of it, guarded by a high brick wall, and the detective's keen eyes noticed that there was a door in this wall.

"The chances seemed to be good that she went through that door," Joe Phenix remarked as he advanced to it.

The portal was locked, but this did not surprise the man-hunter, as it would be natural for the woman to fasten the door after passing through it.

"I have a curiosity to find out who she is," the detective remarked, after making this discovery. "Then too as it is certain that there is something the matter with her the people with whom she lives ought to know it."

"An ordinary woman, in the full possession of her senses, would not have held the conversation with me, a stranger, that this one did to-night."

Acting on this idea the detective went to the front door of the house and, when his ring was answered, inquired concerning a young lady in black, closely veiled, whom he believed to have entered by the door in the wall, explaining that her peculiar actions led him to think that she was not quite right in her mind.

The servant said that no person of that description lived in the house, but she would inform her master about the affair.

The gentleman, a retired merchant, came to the door and when put in possession of the facts ordered a search to be made, for as he remarked, although no woman of the description lived there, still, if by some carelessness the yard door had been left unlocked she might have entered the premises by that way.

The detective accompanied the gentleman when the search was made.

It was soon apparent that the woman had not entered the house, for all the rear doors were securely locked, and the man-servant declared he had personally attended to the fastening of the doors a half-hour or so before.

Within the yard there was no place where the woman could have found concealment, and so the detective was forced to come to the conclusion that he had been in error in supposing the woman had gone through the gate.

She must have entered one of the houses down the street and the man-hunter at once proceeded to make inquiries about the matter.

But he only had his labor for his pains for not the slightest intelligence could he gain of the mysterious veiled lady.

The acute detective was completely puzzled.

"Upon my word! this is about as strange a case as I have had for a long time!" he declared.

"Where the deuce did the woman go, and why did she seek to evade me in this extremely clever manner?

"To judge by her manner she did not seem to care whether she was followed or not, for she never took the trouble to look behind her, as a person who was afraid of being followed most certainly would. And how she came to the knowledge that I was on her track is a mystery."

The man-hunter stood on the corner of the street, with his back to Washington Square, looking in a thoughtful way down the street from which the veiled woman had vanished in such an unaccountable way, as he uttered these reflections.

"Now as far as I can see, there is but one solution to this mystery: the woman *did* enter one of these houses, and the people of the house where she has sought refuge have lied to me about the matter," the detective remarked. "But why should they do anything of the kind? Ah, that is a question which it is difficult for me to answer. The woman did not seem to care whether she was followed or not, and she entered into conversation with me of her own accord, for I should never have thought of speaking to her about the murder of the old Jew. Why then has she played this trick upon me?"

The detective mused for a while upon this question, and then he came to a sudden determination.

"I will be hanged if I don't look into the matter a little!" he exclaimed.

"Of course it appears as if this connecting of an inmate of the Vanderhausen mansion with the murder of Rosengelt was utter nonsense, but I am going to look into the matter for all that. It will not do any hurt, even if no good comes of it. But the first thing to be done is to see young Rosengelt and ascertain from him if his father ever had any business relations with anybody in the Vanderhausen mansion."

CHAPTER XV.

A DISCOVERY.

JOE PHENIX was not a man apt to pay much attention to such intelligence as he had received from the mysterious veiled woman, but there was something about her that impressed him with the idea that he ought to see if there was anything else in the clew which she had given him.

He meditated long and earnestly before he made up his mind to go into the affair, and the first step he took in the matter was to call upon the son of the murdered man.

"Ah, I am glad you have come!" Solomon Rosengelt declared. "I was just going to send for you."

"It is fortunate then that I stopped in."

"The necessary legal formalities were completed this morning, and the private safe of my father opened."

"This is an interesting bit of news!" the detective exclaimed.

"Yes, I knew you would be anxious to know the particulars of the affair," young Rosengelt observed. "If you remember, I told you that there ought to be in the safe from five to eight thousand dollars, as it was my father's custom to keep on hand a large sum of ready money so as to be able to accommodate customers who might desire a large loan."

"Yes, I remember, and you also said that if five thousand dollars or upward was not found in the safe it would indicate that he had a large amount of money on his person when he met his death," the detective remarked.

"True, and the conclusion to which I would come, was that he was on his way to see some customer who desired to negotiate a large loan."

"The inference is a natural one."

"There was not a thousand dollars in the safe," the young man announced.

To be exact there was less than seven hundred—the total sum was six hundred and ninety one dollars."

The detective shook his head and it was plain that this piece of information had made a decided impression upon him.

"Then you conclude that your father, at the time he met his death, was on his way to some customer's house with five or six thousand dollars on his person," Joe Phenix observed, reflectively.

"Yes, I do not think there is a doubt about it," the young man answered.

The words of the mysterious veiled woman rose instantly in the mind of the detective.

She described the slayer of the old Jew as bending over the stricken man and taking something from his pocket, and now this new discovery would seem to imply that she had pictured the scene rightly, for the doer of the bloody deed had evidently added robbery to assassination.

In fact, the aged Hebrew had been killed that he might be robbed.

He was crossing Washington Square too, taking the direct way from his store to the mansion of the millionaire banker.

If there wasn't any truth in the veiled woman's allegation it was certainly very odd that these facts seemed to support her story so well.

"Your father evidently was murdered for his money, and the fact that he had a large sum upon his person must have been known to his murderer," Joe Phenix observed slowly.

"Yes, and does it not really seem as if my father was decoyed by a pretended customer to the spot where he met his death?" the son asked.

"It certainly does," the detective replied. "Do you know of any customer living in that direction?"

The young man reflected for a few moments and then replied in the negative.

"By the way, was Mrs. Vanderhausen, the wife of the president of the Grand Central National Bank, who lives on Washington Square, one of your father's customers?"

"Not to my knowledge; I did not know that there was any such person."

"Ah, I have been misinformed then," Joe Phenix remarked. "I got the idea that this lady was one of your father's customers and surmised that he might have been on his way to her house when he met his death, as she lives on the north side of the Square."

"She was not a customer to my knowledge."

"Of course in such a mysterious affair as this there are all sorts of reports current, and I always make it a rule to sift them down, as well as I am able, so as to see if they amount to anything," the detective explained.

"A good idea I should say," the other remarked.

A few more words of no particular importance passed between the two and then Joe Phenix took his departure.

"Now then, what is my game?" the detective muttered to himself as he proceeded up Broadway.

"There is not the least proof that anybody in the Vanderhausen mansion knows aught of the diamond-broker, but for all that I am going to make a bold push for information in that quarter.

"There is only one person in the house who would be apt to have any dealings with a man like Abraham Rosengelt, and that is Mrs. Vanderhausen herself.

"I am a stranger to her, and even if the banker should have happened to mention that he had employed the detective, Joe Phenix, to look into the safe business, that would not enable her to recognize me, particularly if I introduce myself by a false name.

"Decidedly, it is my game to interview Mrs. Vanderhausen as speedily as possible."

And having come to this determination Joe Phenix lost no time in making his way to the house of the banker.

He anticipated that there might be some little difficulty in gaining speech with the lady, for a woman situated as Mrs. Vanderhausen was, the wife of one of the great money kings, is obliged to deny herself to unknown callers until she understands the nature of their business.

There are beggars of high and low degree who would be apt to make life a burden to those who are fortunate enough to be possessed of a goodly share of this world's valuables if they could gain easy access to their presence, so the lucky possessors of wealth are obliged to be careful how they give interviews to strangers.

Therefore, when the detective ascended the steps of the Vanderhausen mansion he was prepared for a refusal when he should ask to see the wife of the banker.

Upon reflection he had changed his mind somewhat in regard to the game he should play.

His first idea had been to bribe the servant who should answer his ring and so gain admission to the lady's presence, but when he came to think the matter over he arrived at the conclusion that the chances were great he would not succeed.

He had taken note of the servants when he had been in the house with the banker.

"They are a lot of fat, well-paid fellows, and as I fancy that Vanderhausen is a pretty strict master, it might be that to admit me would cost the man his place, and so bribing the fellow would not work," he mused. "But if I send word that I am a detective officer who has been employed by her husband and desire to have speech with her on a business matter of importance the chances are great she will grant me an interview."

"If she knows anything about the robbery of the safe, or is in any way mixed up with the killing of Rosengelt, she will have a deal of nerve if she refuses to see me, for it will be the most natural thing in the world for her to desire to know why I want to talk to her—to ascertain just exactly what I know, and what I suspect."

"If she is innocent of any knowledge of either matter, then her curiosity will be excited to

know why I, a detective, was called in by her husband, and she will be pretty certain to grant the interview I crave."

These reasons seemed good to the detective, and, so, when he reached the Vanderhausen mansion, and the servant answered his ring, he sent the message to the banker's wife that he had framed.

As he anticipated, Mrs. Vanderhausen granted him the favor of an interview; the servant ushered him into the parlor, and five minutes after the wife of the banker made her appearance.

CHAPTER XVI.

SEEKING COUNSEL.

As the reader will possibly remember, Mrs. Vanderhausen was a stately-looking woman, and Joe Phenix was struck by the remarkable likeness she bore to her brother, Horace Lemountain, the Wall street broker, whom the detective knew full well.

The resemblance was so strong the detective was satisfied that if he had met Mrs. Vanderhausen in the street, without knowing who she was, he would have suspected she was the broker's sister.

Joe Phenix was a keen judge of human nature, an expert reader of faces, and when he rose and bowed at Mrs. Vanderhausen's approach, the glance that he had taken at her face made him suspect that she had nerved herself for an unpleasant interview, for though her face was like marble in its haughty coldness, utterly devoid of expression, yet there was a troubled look in her eyes, "those windows of the soul," which seemed to suggest to the experienced man-hunter that the mistress of the mansion was uneasy in her mind.

It is an experienced actor, indeed, who can train the eyes to deceive.

"It is not my custom to grant interviews to strangers," the lady remarked, "but the peculiar message you sent caused me to depart from my usual rule."

"I am very much obliged to you, indeed," the detective replied. "And I can assure you that if my business had not been important I would not have presumed to trouble you. I had the honor of being called upon by your husband, and I mentioned that fact so you would understand that I came strictly upon business."

"Yes, sir; I presume that you desire a private interview?"

"If you would be so kind as to grant me one, I should feel obliged," the detective replied, with a polite bow.

"Follow me to the library, please," the lady said. "We can converse freely there without danger of being overheard."

Joe Phenix bowed again, and then Mrs. Vanderhausen led the way to the library, which, as the reader will remember, was the room where the safe was situated, and where the interview between the detective and the banker had taken place.

Mrs. Vanderhausen stood by the door until Joe Phenix entered, then she waved him to a chair, closed the door, and seated herself by the center table.

"Well, well, you are a plucky woman," thought the detective, as he looked around the apartment, and his gaze fell upon the safe which had been robbed in such a mysterious manner. "If you had anything to do with the taking of the money out of the safe, you no doubt suspect that I have come to talk to you about it, and to bring me right into the room where the crime was committed shows that you have plenty of nerve."

"Now, sir, you can speak with perfect freedom, and with the assurance that no one can play the eavesdropper," Mrs. Vanderhausen said, and as she spoke she fixed her brilliant black eyes full upon his face with a searching look, as though she would read his very soul.

"Madam, I have come to you for information, and I hope that you will not hesitate to give me all that you possibly can," the detective began.

A look of surprise appeared on Mrs. Vanderhausen's face.

"Why, certainly, I shall be glad to oblige you," she replied.

"I come in reference to the late Abraham Rosengelt, the diamond-broker," Joe Phenix announced.

The look of surprise upon the face of the lady deepened.

"Well, I do not understand," she said, slowly.

"I have been informed that Mr. Rosengelt was on his way to your house when he came to his death in the Park yonder. I presume that you have read the newspaper accounts of how he was murdered?"

"Yes, I read of his death," and the face of the woman was like a mask as she spoke; not a sign was there that betrayed, even to the keen-eyed detective, the thoughts that were in her mind.

"Well, as near as I can learn, Mr. Rosengelt was on his way to see you when he was murdered, and the supposition was that he had a large sum of money in his possession—six or seven thousand dollars—and I thought that it was possible that you might be able to give us some

valuable information in regard to the matter. If he had any large sum of money on his person, it would surely indicate that he was killed so the murderer could obtain possession of it."

The lady shook her head slowly, her face like marble.

"You have been misinformed," she said, in cold and measured tones. "I do not know anything about the matter."

But the detective was not inclined to take no for an answer.

"My dear madam, I trust that you will pardon me if I dwell on the point a moment," Joe Phenix remarked, in his most insinuating way.

"I am aware of the peculiar manner in which Mr. Rosengelt did business. I am aware that he was in the habit of loaning large sums of money upon valuable jewels, and that it was his habit to keep such matters a profound secret. Now, if your business with Mr. Rosengelt was of this nature you need not fear to trust the secret to me, for you can rest assured it will be sacredly kept."

A scornful smile appeared on the face of the lady.

"Sir, you surely understand my position in the world!" she exclaimed, haughtily. "You know that I am the wife of one of the richest bankers in New York, and I should think that you would not be liable to believe that any circumstance could arise which could induce me to raise money by pawning my diamonds."

To such a remark little answer could be made without the risk of giving offense, and the detective was anxious not to make a blunder of that kind.

"Of course I am aware, madam, that for a lady like yourself to have any dealings of that kind with a man like the diamond-broker is something entirely out of the common run; still, to my knowledge, some of the best ladies in the city have had just such business transactions with men like Mr. Rosengelt," the detective urged.

"That may be true—I know nothing about it," Mrs. Vanderhausen remarked, in a cold and distant way.

"Strange that I have been so misinformed!" Joe Phenix observed, as though he was much puzzled by the circumstance.

"Yes, it is strange, and I do not see how the report originated, for I assure you, sir, that I never had any business relations whatsoever with Mr. Rosengelt. I never bought anything from the man, or received a penny from him in my life!"

The detective with all his acuteness was puzzled by this decided declaration, for most certainly she seemed to act like a woman who was speaking the truth.

"That is all I have to say, madam," the detective remarked, after hesitating for a few minutes. "I was in hopes to be able to get some information to aid me in my search for the murderer of Mr. Rosengelt. That he was murdered for the money which he carried in an inside breast-pocket of his coat I am sure, and from the fact of his being attacked while crossing the Park made me suppose he was on his way to your house."

"Sorry to have troubled you and I trust you will pardon me for having taken up your time," and the detective rose as a sign that the interview was over.

"You are quite welcome, sir, and I regret that I am not able to afford you any information," and then Mrs. Vanderhausen threw open the door and dismissed the detective with a dignified salutation.

After his departure she proceeded up-stairs to her own apartment, and seating herself in an easy-chair fell into a brown study.

It was evident that the visit of the detective produced a deep impression upon her.

A couple of hours later her brother, the broker, Lemountain, dropped in on his way up-town to his club.

Mrs. Vanderhausen was delighted when he came.

"I am so glad to see you, Horace!" she declared. "I have had such a strange visitor today." And then she told him all the particulars regarding the case of the detective.

Lemountain listened to the story with amazement.

"Upon my word this is about as strange a thing as I ever heard of in all my experience!" he declared when the tale was told.

"Yes, and so entirely unexpected!"

"These detectives are a prying set of beggars!" the broker declared. "I suppose that they are a necessary kind of vermin, though. But the fellow did not get much satisfaction out of you."

"No, indeed!" and the proud lip of the woman curled in scorn. "Why, if this diamond-broker had been on his way to see me, I would not have admitted that I had anything to do with such a man."

"Certainly not! Besides, what difference does it make to any one whether he was or not?" the broker asked.

"None, as far as I can see," Mrs. Vanderhausen replied, with a shake of the head.

"Unless, indeed, this sapient detective has

got it into his head that *you* have something to do with the murder," the young man remarked in a scornful way.

Mrs. Vanderhausen's eyes flashed fire, and an extremely indignant look appeared on her face.

"Oh, Horace, do you really believe that any one would be wretch enough to harbor a suspicion of that kind against me?" she exclaimed.

"Oh, no, I was only joking, sis," the other replied. "But jesting apart, I have known these detectives to make just such stupid blunders."

"Well, this man did not seem to be one who would make a mistake of that kind," the lady observed. "He appeared to be a keen, careful man, with a resolute way, and yet very much of a gentleman."

"What was his name, by the way?" the Wall street man asked, carelessly.

"Upon my word, I never thought to ask him," Mrs. Vanderhausen exclaimed. "Nor did he give it to the servant when he asked to see me. All he said was that he was a detective who had been employed by my husband, and that he wished to see me on particular business."

"The fellow was evidently anxious to keep in the background," the gentleman remarked.

"Yes, it is rather strange, but, until you spoke, it did not occur to me that I did not know his name."

"What was he like?" Lemountain inquired. "I know a lot of these detectives, and it is probable that I am acquainted with this one, if he amounts to anything."

Mrs. Vanderhausen described her visitor.

Lemountain shook his head.

"No, I do not think that I know this man."

"I can easily find out who he is when my husband returns," Mrs. Vanderhausen said. "He will know him, of course."

"Oh, I do not think I would say anything about the matter to him," the broker remarked. "You know what peculiar notions Vanderhausen takes sometimes, and he might take it into his head to get angry, and then the thing is not really worth talking about."

"That is true, and I do not understand why the man came," Mrs. Vanderhausen observed, thoughtfully.

"No doubt that there is a big reward offered for the discovery of the murderer of the old Jew and these bloodhounds will leave no stone unturned to get a clew."

"But I must be off!" and Lemountain rose to his feet. "If this detective troubles you again, just let me know and I will soon put a stop to it!"

"Oh, he was very respectful and polite, although evidently disappointed in not getting the information he sought."

"It was a foolish idea of his to come, anyway." And then the broker departed.

As he descended the steps he muttered to himself:

"What was the man's motive? There is something in the background here, evidently!"

CHAPTER XVII.

THE BANKER IS ASTONISHED.

AND now another week glides by without anything occurring of interest to our readers, and we take up the thread of our story again by introducing Jefferson Vanderhausen, seated in his private office in the Grand Central National Bank.

The banker had just come in from his lunch and was seated in an easy-chair, enjoying a cigar.

And as the smoke wreathes curled lazily up on the air the banker gave himself up to reflections which were not altogether pleasant.

He had been so successful in his schemes that it annoyed him to fail in any carefully devised plan, and the utter failure of his attempt to get young Lemountain in such a situation that he, Vanderhausen, would be able to dictate terms to him was galling to his pride.

"Confound the fellow!" he muttered. "How on earth did he manage to raise the money? By Jove! I thought I had him so that he would be perfectly helpless. But as it is, it seems to be a case of 'the engineer hoist by his own petard,' for the result of my grand *coup* has been to give him a reputation for being an extra capable business man, and if the reports which are flying around the street are true his firm are now doing more business than they had ever dared to hope to gain."

"Well, there is one consolation for me in that. If the rascal makes plenty of money out of his business it may be possible that he will stop drawing funds from his sister—my wife."

"It is the strangest thing in the world too how Mrs. Vanderhausen—a shrewd, sensible woman—uncommonly so, I may say—clings to him!"

"Ah, it is a great pity that the Lord denied us children!" the banker exclaimed with a deep sigh. "If she had little ones of her own to lavish the tenderness of her heart upon the chances are great that she would not think so much of this scamp of a brother."

"But he will come to grief sooner or later; there is no doubt in my mind in regard to that!" the banker declared, emphatically. "The

more money he has, the more dissipated he will become, and, I suppose, that the best course for me to pursue in the premises is to allow matters to take their own direction without attempting to influence them in one way or the other. Act on the old adage, 'Give a dog rope enough and he will hang himself.'"

The bank president's meditations were interrupted at this point by the entrance of his messenger, bearing a card.

"Jackson Von Heister," said Vanderhausen, reading the name inscribed upon the pasteboard. "Admit him."

The messenger withdrew, and in a few moments ushered into the room a very "swell" young man, whose blonde hair and blue eyes betrayed his descent from the old Dutch Knickerbockers, who once ruled the metropolis of the New World.

The gentleman enjoyed the income of a princely fortune, which his prudent father had been careful to tie up so that he could not touch the principal.

He banked at the Grand Central, and Vanderhausen acted as a sort of adviser to him, being an old friend and class-mate of the elder Von Heister.

The bank president shook hands with the young man, offered him a cigar and a chair, both of which the gilded youth accepted in the languid manner which had become as a second nature to him.

"I hav'n't seen you for three or four months," Vanderhausen observed. "Been away, I suppose?"

"Yas, took a run across the water with some fellows who wanted to see a little of life in London and Paree."

"And they got you to go along as a sort of a guide, eh, knowing that you knew the ropes?"

"Yas, but it was an awful bore, though, and I was glad to get back again, though what the deuce I am going to do to pass away the time I don't know," and the young man yawned in a disconsolate way.

"You have too easy a time of it; if you had to stir around and hustle for your money, as the most of young men are obliged to do, it would soon take this nonsense out of you."

"Ah, yes, 'pon my word, if I was obliged to work, I believe I would be dead in a month, don't you know?"

"Not at all! It would put new life in you!" the bank president declared.

"Well, I suppose you are after money, as usual?" he added.

"Yas, I am pretty well cleaned out," the other admitted. "And I thought I would draw on that ten thousand dollars that I gave you about a month ago."

"Ten thousand dollars?" questioned Vanderhausen, evidently surprised.

"Yas, don't you remember? I gave it to you the night we had the little supper at the Hoffman House. The spread that Bertie Van Rensselaer gave to celebrate his retirement from the bachelor ranks."

"Well, yes; now that you recall the affair to my mind, I believe I do remember something about the matter," the other remarked, with a puzzled air.

"If you recollect, I came in late and I was pretty full. I had been gambling at the club with some of the fellows, who put up a big game, and though I am not in the habit of playing for much money, for I think that it is a deuced bore to gamble, anyway, yet, somehow, I got into the swim, and almost before I knew it I had the other fellows broke, and carried away over ten thousand dollars."

"Yes, yes. I remember now that you told us the story of your triumph after you joined us at the table."

"Yas, and as you noticed that I had a remarkable jag on board, you suggested that I had better give the money to you so that I would not lose it on my way home, and I did so."

"True, I remember all about it now," the bank president remarked, and there was an uneasy expression on his face, although he strove to prevent his features from betraying the thoughts that were in his mind.

Like a flash the events of that particular night had come back to him.

Vanderhausen was a man not given to excesses of any kind, but on this one particular occasion he had allowed himself to drink much more than was good for him, and although he was one of those men so constituted that he could get well under the influence of liquor and yet not have it perceptible to those around him, yet he remembered that on this night in question, when he arrived at his mansion, the coachman was obliged to assist him up the steps, and his wife, who was worried by his prolonged absence, took charge of him after he got inside the door.

Although his head was well muddled by the liquor he had drank, he had sense enough to remember about the money he had taken, and had his wife take him to the library, where he placed it in the safe.

Now it was all clear to him; this was the money, a visionary remembrance of which had floated through his brain when he had discovered

that his safe was open, and his conjecture was true that some one had robbed the safe.

"When I get home I will question my wife, and she, undoubtedly, will remember all about it," was the thought that came to him.

"Here is the receipt," observed young Von Heister, taking the paper from his pocketbook.

The bank president cast a careless glance at it, and the uncertain characters, so different from his usually bold hand, plainly revealed to his experienced eyes that he must have been decidedly "under the weather" when he wrote it.

"Yes, it is all right," he remarked.

"I should not have troubled you about the matter—it is an awful bore for me to talk business, don't you know," Von Heister observed. "But when I happened to mention to the fellow outside who attends to the cash that I thought I should have to hit him for a thousand or two, he said that as I had already overdrawn my account, I had better see you about the matter."

"Yes, yes; he was referring to your regular allowance, you know," the banker explained. "He has no knowledge of this ten thousand, as I regarded it as a private matter, and neglected to place the sum to your credit. But I will attend to that matter at once, and you can draw against the money as soon as you wish."

By the aid of his call-bell he summoned the messenger and sent written instructions to place ten thousand dollars to Von Heister's credit.

"Thanks, awfully!" said the young man. "This money will come very handy now, for I am deucedly hard up."

"Yes, it is fortunate that you have the funds to draw upon."

Then after a few more unimportant words Von Heister departed.

The banker sprung to his feet and paced up and down the room in a nervous and excited way.

"There is no doubt now about the matter!" he exclaimed. "I did put this ten thousand dollars in my library safe and it was stolen by some one."

"Who?"

And Vanderhausen stopped short and glared out of the window at the busy, bustling crowd of men hurrying along the sidewalk as he put the question.

Young Lemountain chanced to pass at that moment, arm-in-arm with a friend with whom he had been to lunch.

"There is the man!" Vanderhausen exclaimed, shaking his clinched fist fiercely at the broker who went by totally unconscious of the fact that his appearance at that precise moment had excited such a commotion in the breast of his brother-in-law.

"There is the scoundrel who stole my money and used it to best me at my own game!" and the voice of the bank president was full of wrath as he made this announcement.

"But I will catch him yet, the miserable scamp! It is not the loss of the money so much as the fact that by the aid of it he was able to defeat my plans, and, no doubt, was laughing in his sleeve when I was laying down the law to him."

"I must have that detective, Phenix, here at once!"

A minute later the bank-messenger was on his way to notify the detective.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A DISAGREEABLE CONCLUSION.

As it happened Joe Phenix was in his office and in ten minutes from the time that the message was dispatched the detective was ushered into the presence of the banker.

"I sent for you, Mr. Phenix, in regard to this affair at my house," Vanderhausen began as soon as the detective was seated.

"Have you been able to do anything about the case?"

"I regret to be obliged to say that I have not," Joe Phenix replied. "Not having any clew to work upon, it has not been possible for me to do anything."

"Well, I have ascertained one fact. If you remember, it was my impression that I had put quite a large sum of money in the safe, and as there wasn't any money in it I came to the conclusion that the safe had been robbed."

The detective nodded.

"My conjecture in regard to the money was correct," and then he related the particulars of Von Heister's visit, and then detailed what had occurred on the night of Bertie Van Rensselaer's spread.

He made a full confession, and did not shrink from stating how he had allowed the wine to get the best of him.

"You see, Mr. Phenix, I do not hesitate to tell you just what an ass I made of myself," Vanderhausen said in conclusion.

There was a grave expression upon the face of the detective, and he pondered over the matter for a few moments, then he said:

"Mr. Vanderhausen, your disclosure has suggested some ideas to me that I am afraid will not prove to be agreeable to you if I put them into words."

The banker looked at the detective for a mo-

ment, a hard, determined expression upon his face.

"Mr. Phenix, I have employed you in this case to discover the truth, and I want you to go ahead, no matter who is hurt!" he declared.

"You wish me to speak freely and fully, then?"

"Yes, by all means!"

"You hid this money away in a drawer under some other papers, so that no one would suspect it was there, or be apt to discover it without making an examination?"

"Yes, I exercised the proverbial cunning of a drunken man."

"Did your wife accompany you into the library—did she know that you had this money and placed it in the safe?" the detective asked.

The banker saw the drift of the questions at once and a dark look came over his face.

"Well, I really am not able to answer those questions as clearly as I should like to do," Vanderhausen replied, slowly and reflectively.

"You must remember that my condition at the time was not conducive to careful observation, but as nearly as I can recollect Mrs. Vanderhausen did not enter the room with me. It is my impression that, with that excessive caution, which liquor produces in a man of my temperament, I asked her to wait in the entry, and I think she did so."

"In that case, then, she would not know that you placed the money in the safe?"

"No, she would not."

"But you are not absolutely certain in regard to this fact?"

"Under the circumstances, it is impossible for me to be."

"Well, knowing the natural curiosity of woman-kind, I should think the chances are great that your wife took care to see what you did while you were in the room," the detective remarked with slow deliberation.

The banker reflected over the matter for a good five minutes and then he observed with the air of a man who hated to make the admission:

"I am sorry to say that I think you are right in your conclusion."

"Now, in a case of this kind, when money is secreted and then stolen, and the discovery is made that a certain party knew where the money was, and it was possible for that party to get at the funds, the suspicion is natural that the person alluded to may be the guilty one."

"Yes, yes, very true!" And then Vanderhausen jumped to his feet and paced up and down the room for a few moments, evidently much agitated.

Suddenly pausing before the detective he exclaimed:

Mr. Phenix, I will not attempt to conceal from you that your words have made a great impression upon me, and I fully realize that there is a great deal of truth in what you have said."

"Of course it is unpleasant," the detective observed in his quiet way, "but you employed me to discover the truth and I must not hesitate even if I know that it will not be palatable to you."

"Of course not! You must go straight on without fear or favor. Hew to the line and let the chips fall where they will!" Vanderhausen declared, resuming his seat.

"And now I will tell you something which will be apt to confirm your suspicions that you are on the right scent," the banker continued. "If you remember, my suspicions pointed to my brother-in-law."

Joe Phenix nodded.

"I know that he needed money very badly just then, and I thought him none too good to help himself to the money in my safe if he got the chance. He was in my house on that particular night—came to see his sister—my wife—and I firmly believe with the idea of getting money out of her. I did not think he succeeded for I knew—or fancied I knew that she had none. But the fact is certain that he got money out of somebody, either that night, or the next day, for he was able to meet his liabilities on change here and came out with flying colors."

"Now if my wife helped herself to this money it was to give it to him."

"Yes, undoubtedly," Joe Phenix observed. "By the way, I have been keeping a watch upon Lemountain."

"Well, have you ascertained anything of importance?" the banker asked, eagerly.

"No, I have not. As far as I know the young man is leading a most exemplary life."

"You astonish me!" Vanderhausen exclaimed. "I had a curiosity to know how he conducted himself out of business hours and a month or two ago employed a detective to shadow him; and in his report the man said that Lemountain was leading a wild life, gambling and drinking to excess."

"That may have been the truth at that time, but most certainly the man is not doing anything of the kind now," the detective replied. "I have shadowed him pretty closely, and I am certain that if he had been indulging in anything of the kind I would have discovered it. The only thing at all out of the way in

his conduct is that he has become fascinated with one of the ballet girls of the Paragon Theater, and in order to be near his sweetheart he has taken a room in the same house, and I too have an apartment there, so as to be able to keep my eyes upon him."

"In love with a theater girl, eh?" the banker exclaimed. "Well, if she is like some of these dancing girls that I have heard of she will be apt to cost him a pretty penny before he gets rid of her."

"She doesn't seem to be one of that kind," the detective replied. "She is a nice, quiet English girl, and has for a room-mate another girl who also dances in the ballet at the Paragon. Both are well-behaved, and any one meeting them in the street, or house, would never suspect that they were theater girls at all. Lemountain pays the most devoted attention to the lady, and, if one can judge from appearances, he intends to marry her."

"Yes—make a donkey of himself!" the bank president growled, in utter disgust. "Why, my dear Mr. Phenix, that fellow, with his social standing in the city, ought to be able to marry an heiress. There are plenty of girls with lots of money whom he could get if he only tried. And the idea of a man in his position throwing himself away upon a theater girl, when he might get a rich wife, whose money would enable him to take a commanding position in the city! But I suppose this girl is pretty, and he has been captivated by her charms."

"Oh, no, there isn't anything captivating or brilliant about her," Joe Phenix replied. "She might be called good-looking, for she is not ugly, but she certainly is not fascinating."

"Well, there is no accounting for men's tastes, you know; but it certainly is strange that such a man as Lemountain should be idiot enough to run after a girl of this kind."

"Yes; but such things happen every day, and as he is keeping perfectly straight now, it seems as if his love affair with this ballet girl was good for him."

"That is true, but I have not confidence enough in the man to believe that it will last," Vanderhausen declared. "But to return to this robbery again: what steps shall we take next?"

The detective reflected over the matter for a moment before replying, then said:

"Better have a talk with your wife about it, and can you arrange it so that I can hear what passes between you without her knowledge?"

"Certainly, no trouble about that! There is a closet in the library where you can conceal yourself so you can overhear all the conversation."

The detective said that this would do, and when the banker went home that afternoon Joe Phenix accompanied him.

Concealed in the closet he heard the conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Vanderhausen, and as the shrewd detective anticipated, the lady professed to know nothing at all about any money being placed in the safe.

After she departed, the banker asked Joe Phenix his opinion.

"Oh, I don't know what to say. It is a very mysterious case, but, as far as I can see, the circumstances lead me to suspect that your wife has deceived you in this matter. She did know that the money was in the safe, and she either took it herself, to give to her brother, or instructed him so that he could get at it."

"Yes, I am afraid so—the infernal scoundrel!" the banker exclaimed. "I can hardly blame my wife, for he is her brother, and blood is thicker than water. Keep on with the case, and spare no expense!"

And with this injunction he dismissed the detective.

CHAPTER XIX.

A MYSTERIOUS WARNING.

THE dusk of the evening had come as Joe Phenix made his way slowly across the Park.

The detective was in a brown study.

"The banker took the disagreeable information that I was obliged to impart to him a great deal better than I expected," he remarked, communing with himself. "But I had to say it, for in a case of this kind the truth must be told."

"There is no doubt in my mind that the wife was the one who took the money. Her brother was on the brink of ruin. It was likely he confided to her his belief that it was her husband who had contrived the trap in which he had been caught; and although the banker was her husband her woman's sense of justice was roused; she considered that he had acted cruelly in scheming to ruin Lemountain, and she felt as if the blow directed at her brother had also fallen upon her. She was injured, and then the thought of the money in the safe came to her."

"The banker was under the influence of liquor when he put it in the safe and the chances were great that he had forgotten all about it. If it was still there it would surely seem as if this conjecture was correct."

"She managed to get hold of the key of the outer lock, and, in some way had acquainted herself with the combination by means of which the safe was opened."

"The money was secured by her, but she was

disturbed by the approach of some one—Vanderhausen himself, probably, and so was obliged to hurry away without being able to close the safe again."

At this point the detective sat down upon a bench so as to think the matter over.

"That is a reasonable explanation of this safe robbery," he remarked. "But it all turns on one point. Did Lemountain get money from Mrs. Vanderhausen on this particular night?"

"If he did then the money must have come from the safe, or—"

And Joe Phenix, coming to a dead stop, cast his eyes upon the bench where the body of the old Jew had been found.

"Was she the assassin who met Rosengelt in this Park, struck a dagger to his heart, and then robbed him of his money?"

The man-hunter meditated over this question for a few moments, then he shook his head as though he was not willing to believe that the surmise was correct.

"No, no, despite the assertion of the mysterious veiled woman that it was a female hand that sent the old Jew to his doom, I cannot bring myself to believe that Mrs. Vanderhausen could have committed the deed."

"That she might have taken the money from the safe is quite possible. It is not such a great sin for a wife to help herself to her husband's money; hundreds of good women do that and in this case it was to save a brother from what might be considered an unjust persecution."

"Under such circumstances many women would consider it a very venial sin indeed, and women whom no money could hire to commit such a cold-blooded, deliberate murder as was the killing of the old Jew, would not shrink from such an act as the taking of the money from the safe."

"No, no, when the matter is calmly deliberated upon it must be admitted that the chances are fully a thousand to one if Mrs. Vanderhausen advanced any money to her brother she obtained it from the safe and not by murdering the old Jew."

"In regard to obtaining the combination of the safe that is easily explained. It is probable that when the combination was originally set Vanderhausen noted it down, and the memorandum was seen at some time by the wife. But now, although I have settled this matter to my satisfaction, I am not able to see any way to go ahead."

"The secret of the safe robbery lies between the brother and sister, and as it is not likely that either one will admit that they had anything to do with it, the chances are great that the mystery will never be solved. But is it possible that any one in that household had anything to do with the murder of the Jew?"

"I should never have thought of such a thing if the words of that mysterious veiled woman had not suggested it to me, and, really, for a man of my years and experience to pay any attention to the notions of a woman who certainly acted as if there was something the matter with her head, is rather ridiculous; yet, strange to say, her words made a deep impression upon me."

The detective pondered over the matter for fifteen or twenty minutes, then rose and proceeded to Broadway, where he entered a restaurant and had supper.

After the meal was dispatched he went up-town and lounged around the hotels for a while, then found his way to the Paragon Theater.

By this time he had ascertained in what part of the auditorium Lemountain usually sat, so it was an easy matter for him to ascertain whether the broker was in the audience or not.

Lemountain was in his accustomed seat, apparently enjoying the performance as though he had not witnessed the burlesque a dozen times already.

When the curtain descended at the end of the first act, the detective followed the example of many of the audience and strolled out into the street.

As he stood in front of the theater, Solomon Rosengelt came up Broadway, and as soon as he saw the detective, accosted him.

"I have something to say to you, Mr. Phenix, if you can spare me a few moments," the young man said.

"Certainly! I am at your service."

"Is there any place in the neighborhood where we can have a quiet talk without danger of being overheard?"

Joe Phenix reflected for a moment.

"Yes, there is an English ale-house around on the side street, and by taking a table in a corner we will be able to converse without much danger of being overheard by any one, for the place is seldom well patronized until the theaters are out."

"I should think it would answer, then."

To the ale-house the two proceeded.

As the detective predicted, there were few customers in the place, and the pair seated themselves at a table in a corner where they could converse freely, without danger of any one playing the eavesdropper upon them.

Young Rosengelt ordered ale, and after it was brought he said:

"I presume that you have not been able to accomplish anything yet?"

"No. I should have notified you immediately if I had discovered anything of importance."

"There was a man called upon me to-day who said that he came from you."

Joe Phenix looked surprised.

"Why, that is strange," he remarked. "I did not send any one. If I had wished to communicate with you, I would have come in person. Most certainly I would not have sent any one."

"That is exactly the conclusion to which I came after the man took his departure, and I took time to reflect upon the matter."

"What did the fellow have to say for himself? Did he try to get any money out of you?" the detective asked.

"No, and that was where he was cunning, for if he had I should have suspected that all was not right immediately."

"What seemed to be the object of his visit? What did he have to say for himself?"

"Well, really, nothing much. He was very mysterious, said he was acting under you, and that you had asked him to drop in and see if anything new about my father's murder had come to my knowledge. I answered in the negative, and he remarked that it was an extremely difficult case, but you would solve the mystery if any one could; then he took his departure."

"Rather an odd affair."

"Yes, I thought so, after I took time to reflect upon the matter; then it suddenly occurred to me that it might be possible that the man *did* not come from you, and it had not been wise for me to admit that you were engaged on the case."

"I am not surprised that you were deceived, for the trick would have succeeded with nine men out of ten," the detective remarked. "The man evidently had a suspicion that I was working up the affair, and he wanted to be sure of it."

"Yes, that idea came to me upon reflection."

"Well, my dear Mr. Rosengelt, it is my impression that the person who engineered this little scheme has made a false move."

"But who do you suppose it is?"

"Only one person in all the world would care whether I was engaged in the matter or not," the detective replied.

"And that is the one who struck the blow which stole my father's life away!" the young man exclaimed in deep and tremulous tones.

"Yes, and the fact that the party is anxious to know if I am engaged in the case shows me that certain inquiries which I have made in a particular quarter has excited alarm, which is convincing proof that I am on the right scent, but I was so doubtful about the thing that I could hardly bring myself to believe that there was any use in going ahead, for, apparently, I was not making any progress. Now, the next point is to find out who this man is that called upon you."

"He was a stranger to me, though it seems as if I had seen him before; but I have a wretched memory for faces, so that I cannot place him."

"Describe him."

"A rather tall, gaunt man, with a smooth face and sandy hair, dark complexion, restless, shifty, light-blue eyes, and a habit of putting in a great many 'sirs' in his conversation."

Joe Phenix laughed in his quiet way.

"Do you remember the day you came to my office and told me that you thought you were being watched?"

"Yes, yes, I remember now; it is the same man!" the other exclaimed.

"Colonel Lem Snorter, a private detective," Joe Phenix explained. "And I will call him to a speedy account for this little trick of his. The murderer has made a mistake, and now I have hopes of getting at the heart of the mystery!"

This announcement of the detective brought the interview to a close.

CHAPTER XX.

A WARNING.

SOLOMON ROSENGELT went on his way, and Joe Phenix returned to the Paragon Theater.

He remained there until the end of the performance, and then "shadowed" Lemountain as usual, performing this task so skillfully that the Wall street man had no suspicion that his movements were watched, although he was on the lookout now to detect anything of the kind, for ever since the banker had informed him that a spy had tracked his footsteps he had been fearful that the trick might be played on him again.

On this particular night, as on the previous occasions when Joe Phenix had played the spy upon the broker, Lemountain escorted the two daring girls home, stopping at the little restaurant on the way for supper.

"Upon my word, this young man is behaving himself remarkably well," the detective commented, as, concealed by the shadows in the Park, he watched the girls and the broker ascend the steps of the lodging-house.

"It really seems as if I was wasting my time in watching him," he continued, reflectively. "Can it be that he has turned over a new leaf? for according to the report made to the banker

by the detective who was employed to watch Lemountain, he was leading an extremely fast life, and among his broker friends, too, he bears the reputation of being a particularly fast young man.

"It is extremely strange that he should change all of a sudden. Can it be possible that his love for this girl has made a different man of him? It really looks so, and it is odd, too, that he should be fascinated by her, for there are twenty girls on the Paragon stage who are by far prettier and more attractive than she is. I suppose it is one of those inexplicable things that sometimes are such a puzzle—a riddle for which there is no solution."

"It would seem that I am merely wasting my time in watching this young man, but I will keep it up for a little while longer, so as to make sure that this sudden change in his habits is not put on with intent to deceive."

"From the way he acts it is plain to me that he is afraid some one is playing the spy upon him, and it may be that he is behaving himself so well in order that suspicion may be lulled."

At this point the detective consulted his watch. It lacked a few minutes of twelve.

"I had no idea that it was so late," he remarked. "It is time to go to bed, but I do not feel the least desire for sleep, so I will sit down for a while and meditate."

There was a bench near at hand, the detective seated himself upon it, and then his eyes wandered to the north, his gaze finally resting upon the house of the banker, Vanderhausen.

And as his eyes fell upon the mansion his mind reverted to the private detective.

"Some one, of course, employed Snorter to find out if I had been engaged by young Rosengelt to search for the murderer of his father," Joe Phenix mused.

"Now the question arises, why should any one suspect that I had aught to do with the case, for I have not appeared prominently in the matter in any way?"

"Only in one quarter have I asked any questions which would lead any one to suspect that I have any interest in the case; only one person can have any idea that I am anxious to find out who it was that Abraham Rosengelt was on his way to see when he was assaulted in this Park—Mrs. Vanderhausen, she does not know for certain that I am employed on the case, although it is natural, under the circumstances, that she should suspect that I am in search of the murderer."

"It is clear then that either Mrs. Vanderhausen has set Snorter to work, or some one whom she has told of my visit."

"There is no other way of accounting for the matter; as I said to young Rosengelt, it is a false move, and, unless I am greatly mistaken, I shall score a point on it."

"The chances are great that Snorter, who does not like me, will refuse to give any information about the matter, but unless he is a great deal smarter than I think he is I will be able to convince him, I fancy, that it will be decidedly to his advantage to make a clean breast in regard to the matter," and the detective smiled grimly as he uttered the remark, for the private detective was a man whom he utterly despised, the colonel, as he delighted to be called, being one of those detectives who relied more upon his brass and impudence for his success than to the little shrewdness he possessed.

The detective was deep in his reflections when he was roused from his meditations by the sound of a sigh.

He turned, and, to his surprise, saw that upon the other end of the bench sat the mysterious veiled woman who had conversed with him on a previous occasion.

"If I was a superstitious man I should be apt to believe that there was something uncanny about this woman," the detective muttered under his breath as he surveyed the unknown.

"She comes as noiselessly as a ghost, and gives no more warning of her approach than if she walked on air. Decidedly she is more unnatural and spirit-like than any mortal I ever encountered."

"You are in danger," said the veiled woman, abruptly, speaking in the same strange, mechanical tone which she had adopted in her first interview with the detective. And another odd thing was that she did not look at Joe Phenix when she spoke, but stared straight ahead into vacancy, just as if she was not conscious that there was any one near her.

"Eh?" exclaimed the detective, puzzled by the strangeness of the speech.

"You are in danger, I say," the woman repeated, but still not looking at the man by her side.

"Your warning is addressed to me, then?"

"Who else?"

"Well, from the way in which you spoke, it seemed to be more likely that you were communing with yourself than addressing me."

"No; it is to you I give the warning."

"You say that I am in danger?"

"Yes."

"Explain!"

"I cannot."

"How is that?" the detective asked. "Why can you not explain?"

"Because I cannot; that is the only reason that I am able to give. I know that it is not reasonable for me to say to you that you are in danger, and not be able to explain matters fully, but it is not possible for me to do it."

"This is a very strange announcement," the detective observed. "But I do not doubt the truth of the statement. Men in my line of business are seldom out of danger."

"That is true; when a man attempts to hunt down desperate criminals he takes his life in his hands."

"You know what my business is then?" Joe Phenix asked, somewhat surprised by the speech.

"Oh, yes; you are a detective, and your name is Phenix. But that is not your right name," the woman went on, in her peculiar mechanical way. "Years ago you bore another, but there came a fearful calamity, which consigned you to a living tomb. You died a civil death, but from your ashes a new man arose, like the fabled phenix from its couch of flame, and so it is not strange that you selected the name which you have since made famous."

More and more astonished grew the detective as he listened to the words of the woman.

The intimate knowledge which she possessed of his life amazed him.

There were only two persons who knew the particulars with which the woman seemed to be so well-acquainted.

"In his early manhood he had been sent to State Prison for life by the cunningly-contrived machinations of a fiend-like enemy."

He had been buried alive in a tomb, as the mysterious woman stated.

From his prison-house he had been released by a peculiar chain of circumstances.

A desperate band of criminals had arisen in New York, and their movements were made with such skill that the authorities could not bring them to justice.

In this emergency an offer was made to the convict at Sing Sing by the chief of the Metropolitan Police, who had doubts in regard to the guilt of the convicted man.

If he could destroy the criminal band he should go free.

The offer was accepted, and under the name of Joe Phenix the convict entered upon his task.

He succeeded, and from that time forth devoted his life to the hunting down of criminals, but the only two men who knew his secret—who knew how it was that he became one of the man-hunters of the metropolis, were both dead.

There was only one explanation of the mystery.

The strange woman was a clairvoyant.

"It is unfortunate for me that you cannot give more definite information," the detective observed.

"Yes, I regret it; I would gladly tell you more if I could, but I cannot; all I can say is that you are threatened with a great danger—that your life will shortly be put in peril and if you are wise you will be constantly on your guard."

"Why is it that you cannot give me full information?"

"Because I do not know anything more."

"How comes it that you know what you do?" Phenix inquired, anxious for an explanation.

"I cannot tell you."

"Why? Are you afraid of getting into trouble?"

"Oh, no! Who should trouble me because I warn you?"

"The party, or parties, who intend to harm me."

"But I do not know them, nor they me," the woman replied.

"How comes it then that you possess this knowledge?" asked the detective, more and more surprised.

"I cannot tell you. It seems to come to me like a dream, and the inspiration to warn you as quickly as possible was so strong that I could not resist it."

"Yes, but how did you know that you would find me here?" Joe Phenix asked.

"I do not know; something told me that if I should come here I would find you, and I obeyed the impulse."

The woman rose to her feet as she concluded.

"One moment! Does the danger come from a man or woman?"

"A man!" And then she glided away.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN A TRAP.

JOE PHENIX watched the woman, motionless and silent, until she got about a hundred feet away and then he rose to his feet.

"I will see just where you go this time, my lady; you can depend upon that!" he exclaimed.

And then, with noiseless steps, he followed after her.

On this occasion she took precisely the same course as she had done when the detective followed her before.

Warned by his experience on that occasion Joe Phenix hurried after her so that she was

only about fifty feet in advance of him when she turned the corner of the street.

It was an easy matter to track her, for she went straight on, seemingly careless whether she was followed or not, never even turning her head to glance behind her.

The detective was following so closely in her rear that he was satisfied she would not be able to seek shelter anywhere without his knowledge.

His anticipations were justified, for as he turned the corner of the street the veiled woman was just entering the door in the wall which separated the yard of the corner house from the street.

"Aha! she did go in there, then!" the detective exclaimed, as the closing door hid the woman from view.

"Now, why on earth did the people in the house want to lie about the matter, and declare that there wasn't any such woman on the premises?"

"Have I stumbled on a family skeleton, and are they anxious to keep the fact from becoming public that there is a woman in the house who is a little weak in the upper story? It would seem so; that is the only reasonable explanation; but she most certainly has told me some strange things, whether her mind is affected or not; and if she isn't a clairvoyant, it would puzzle any one to explain how she came by her knowledge."

By this time the detective had reached the door in the wall; he tried it, and, as he had anticipated, found it was locked.

"Now that is a very strange fact," Joe Phenix mused. "She did not seem to care in the least whether she was followed or not, but after passing through the door she was careful to lock it after her."

"To-morrow I will see if I can't make an examination of these premises, so as to be able to locate this woman."

And when the morrow came the detective was as good as his word.

Circumstances favored him; the owner of the building was a prominent politician with whom Joe Phenix was well acquainted, and he was glad of an opportunity to favor the detective.

So, about twelve o'clock, having taken the trouble to alter his appearance, Joe Phenix made his appearance at the house in company with the owner, who announced that the Water Board had complained that the plumbing was not just right, and he had brought an experienced man there to see what ought to be done.

Therefore, while the owner held the occupant in conversation, Joe Phenix examined the house from top to bottom, and, with rule in hand, made a great many measurements.

He had plenty of opportunity to converse with the servants, and was not slow to avail himself of the privilege.

His maneuver was a complete failure, however, for he neither saw any one in the house who resembled the veiled woman, nor was he able to learn anything about her.

If she was in the house, the fact was kept concealed from the servants, or else they were sworn to secrecy.

Joe Phenix had confided to the politician his purpose in visiting the house, and that worthy had done his best to draw from the tenant all the information possible in regard to the inmates of the mansion, but he had not succeeded in gaining any more information than the detective about the woman.

"It is an odd case," he remarked to Joe Phenix.

"Yes, but it is not of any particular importance," the detective replied. "I merely wanted to look into the thing to satisfy my curiosity; that is all. But I am much obliged to you for the interest you have taken in the affair, all the same."

Before proceeding upon this quest Joe Phenix had set the machinery in motion to bring about a meeting between himself and Colonel Snorter.

He wanted an opportunity to talk to that worthy alone, and in such a place that no one could interfere between himself and the private detective; but he knew Snorter well enough to be aware that he would not be apt to trust himself alone with a man like Phenix, with whom he had interfered on a couple of occasions.

Strategy must be resorted to then to bring about the meeting.

A legal friend of the detective had apartments in the top story of one of the prominent downtown office buildings, and Joe Phenix got permission from him to use the rooms for an hour, late in the afternoon.

To this place a decoy letter brought the private detective, and he was much amazed upon entering the office to be confronted by Joe Phenix.

The detective received him in the most cordial manner, though.

"Ah, my dear fellow, I am glad to see you!" Joe Phenix exclaimed, rising and placing a chair for the other. "Sit down and make yourself comfortable."

The new-comer was in a measure reassured by this cordial greeting, so he assumed the

beaming smile which was wont to deck his face when he conferred with a client and sunk into the chair.

But Joe Phenix's next movement was one calculated to cause him considerable anxiety, for the detective locked the door and put the key in his pocket.

"Hello! what the deuce do you mean by that?" the colonel exclaimed.

"Only taking measures to prevent anybody from interrupting us," Joe Phenix replied.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE COLONEL SPEAKS.

COLONEL SNORTER looked around him as though calculating the possibilities of an escape, for the unexpected movement of the other had aroused his alarm.

But a single glance convinced him that he was in a trap, and his rage was great when he reflected how easily he had been caught.

"Say! you know, I don't like this kind of business at all," he protested, endeavoring to look dignified, and to conceal the terror which he really felt.

"To what business do you refer?" asked the other, taking a chair and sitting down within easy reach of the visitor.

"Why, you locking the door, and then too I hadn't any idea that I was going to meet you when I came here!" the private detective exclaimed, with a touch of indignation in his tone.

"I suppose that it is quite safe to say that if you had known that you were going to meet me here that you would not have come," Joe Phenix remarked, in his calm, judicial way.

"Well, I don't know about that," the other responded, looking askance at the host and evidently not disposed to make the admission.

"But I did not expect to see you, of course, and I must say that I consider it very unhandsome treatment to play such a trick on a man."

"Well, I suppose I must admit that I did deceive you, but you see, colonel, I had an idea that if you knew it was a gentleman about my size who wanted to see you that you would not come."

"I don't know about that. I can tell you, Mr. Joe Phenix, that Colonel Lem Snorter is never afraid to face the music!" the other blustered.

"I am glad to hear you say so for it gives me a chance to go directly to the point at once!" the other declared, his voice getting stern and deep.

"I have discovered that by going to Mr. Solomon Rosengelt, and in an underhand and extremely low manner, namely, representing that you came from me when you did not—deliberately lying about the matter, in fact, you managed to ascertain that I have been retained by him to find the murderer of his father."

"It is no such thing!" the private detective declared, getting very red in the face.

"That is not the truth, then?"

"No, sir!"

"Explain what is!"

"Well, I went to see him to ascertain if he would give a good big reward to the man who found out the murderer, but he would not talk, for he said you had charge of the case."

"Strange that he should tell such a different story about the matter," Joe Phenix observed in a reflective way.

"When did you ever know a Jew to tell the truth when he could lie just as well as not?" the colonel declared.

"Well, as far as my experience goes, I have found that the Jews tell the truth just about as much as the Gentiles, and in this matter I certainly believe that it is you who lie, and not the Jew."

"Do you mean to insult me?" the colonel roared at the top of his voice, and as he spoke he thrust his hand behind him as if to draw a pistol.

Joe Phenix was fully prepared for just such a movement, and no sooner did the colonel reach for his weapon than the lion-limbed detective grasped him by the throat with his left hand and bore him over backward to the floor.

The colonel struggled with all his might but he was about as helpless in the grasp of his opponent as an ordinary mortal would be in the coil of an anaconda.

Joe Phenix choked the other until he was almost helpless, and then he took his weapons away from him.

The private detective was a regular walking-arsenal, too, having a pair of self-acting revolvers and an eight-inch bowie-knife.

Joe Phenix released his grip on the colonel's throat, put the weapons in one of the drawers of the desk, turned the key and then took his seat again.

"Now, if you please, we will resume our conversation," he said in the most matter-of-fact way, just as if he hadn't nearly choked the life out of his visitor.

The colonel rose to his feet fairly boiling over with rage, his passion the greater because he now understood that he was helpless in the hands of his host.

"I want you to distinctly understand, sir,

that I consider that this is devilish unhandsome treatment for a man like myself!" he exclaimed as he picked up his chair, which had been overthrown by Joe Phenix's onslaught, and sat down on it.

"A man who provokes a fight ought not to complain if he gets the worst of the encounter," the detective replied.

"You insulted me, sir, and I am a gentleman, sir, begad! by both birth and breeding and I will not allow any man to tell me that I lie without resenting the insult!" the other blustered.

"Yes, but you know that it is the truth!"

"No, sir, I do not! And I am astonished that a man like yourself should be willing to take the word of a miserable Jew before that of a gentleman of my reputation!"

"When you come to talk about reputation, Snorter, it seems to me that the less you have to say about yours the better it will be for you," Joe Phenix remarked, dryly.

"Begad, sir, I don't know about that! You just ask any of the big men of the metropolis, sir, about me and it is my opinion, sir, that they will say that I am a good man to tie to!"

"I see that you have a good opinion of yourself if no one else has; but now to come down to business. I presume you understand that I did not go to the trouble of getting you here without having a good reason for it."

"Yes, I suppose so, but I want you to understand, Mr. Phenix, that I consider this treatment on your part is extremely ungentlemanly."

"You think so?"

"I do, sir, decidedly!"

"Just wait until I get through with you and I fancy you will have occasion to talk," Joe Phenix remarked in a tone full of meaning.

A look of alarm appeared on the face of the colonel, but he banished it as soon as possible and began to bluster again.

"The advantage is on your side now, Mr. Phenix," he remarked. "That I am obliged to admit, but you may depend upon it that my time will come and I will hold you to a strict account for this little affair, sir."

"In that case then I ought to be wise enough to make hay while the sun shines, eh?" and a grim smile appeared on the stern face of Joe Phenix. "I am much obliged to you for the suggestion and you can depend upon my improving it."

The colonel looked uneasy; he did not like the way matters were going.

"Now then, I want a little information from you, if you please," the detective said.

"Information about what?"

"Why did you interfere in this Rosengelt matter? What difference did it make to you whether I was engaged on the case or not?"

The colonel hesitated for a moment before he replied and then he said:

"Well, I thought there might be a chance for me to make a stake out of the thing, and I wanted to know who were engaged on the case."

"Who told you that I had anything to do with the matter?"

"No one; I merely suspected that as it was a big case you might be apt to have a finger in the pie."

"I am sorry to say, Colonel Snorter, that I have not sufficient confidence in you to believe that you are telling the truth," Joe Phenix declared.

"Truth or not, I reckon that it is the only statement that you will get out of me!" the other replied, angrily.

"That remains to be seen," the man-hunter retorted. "You ought to know me well enough to understand that I did not go to the trouble of getting you here without having prepared a way to force you to give me the information that I desire."

"If you attempt any violence I will call for assistance!" the colonel cried, bounding to his feet and seizing his chair by the back as though he contemplated using it for a weapon.

Joe Phenix also rose to his feet, and though the colonel was not a small man the man-hunter towered above him like an avenging angel.

"You will have to call pretty loud to make anybody hear you," the detective asserted. "We are on the top floor of the building—it is a fire-proof structure, with remarkably thick walls, and at this late hour in the afternoon the majority of the occupants of the neighboring offices have gone home, so that it is not unreasonable to suppose that no matter how loudly you call your cries will be unheeded."

"This is a most villainous trap!" the colonel declared, growing quite pale, and evidently in a fearful state of alarm. "What do you intend to do?"

"Thrash you within an inch of your life!" and as he spoke Joe Phenix drew a heavy cowhide whip from where he had it concealed in the back of his coat.

"I am going to give you a lesson which I think will teach you to be more careful in future how you interfere in my affairs."

And then the man-hunter brandished the cowhide in the air in an extremely ominous way and took a step toward the now thoroughly frightened private detective.

For all his boasts Colonel Snorter was a rank coward, so when he heard the whistle of the heavy whip in the air and realized that he stood a good chance of getting a most fearful thrashing, he immediately came to the conclusion that discretion was the better part of valor.

"Hold on, hold on!" he cried, retreating in alarm, and holding up the chair before him as a shield. "My dear Mr. Phenix, do not be hasty! Listen to reason!"

"I do not feel inclined to listen to anything but a statement from you as to why you interfered in this matter!" the detective replied. And again he brandished the whip as though eager to test its weight and strength upon the person of Colonel Snorter.

"Be patient, my dear sir; I really did not think that you were in earnest about this matter!" the colonel declared, thus endeavoring to come down gracefully.

"Oh, I am in earnest! There is no doubt about that!" and the strong-armed detective gave the cowhide another whirl through the air.

The colonel fairly shivered as the sound of the whistling whip fell upon his ears.

"Of course I shall only be too glad to oblige you with all the particulars, if you are at all anxious about the matter. Sit down—sit down! and I will explain; but I really thought you were joking about the matter," and the colonel forced a smile, which was a ghastly grin indeed.

"If you are inclined to be reasonable you will find me so," Joe Phenix asserted, as he resumed his seat, and put away the whip.

"I shall be delighted to oblige you, now that I fully understand all about the affair," the colonel asserted, in the best-natured way possible, as he sat down.

"Well, I had an idea that we would come to an understanding," Joe Phenix remarked, dryly.

"Certainly! I will give you all the information in my power, although really I do not believe that it will be much use to you. Of course you understand, as a professional man, that my reluctance to speak arose from the fact that men in our line of business should regard it as a sacred duty to keep inviolable the confidence reposed in us by a client."

"Yes, that is true; but the circumstances of this case are such that you may be pardoned for speaking."

"It is mighty little information that I can give you, but such as it is you are welcome to it."

"Proceed."

The colonel drew a letter from his pocket.

"Three days ago I received this." And then he read aloud:

"Inclosed is five dollars. Find out whether or no Joe Phenix is engaged on the Rosengelt case, and five more will be paid. Address, J. KATTS,
General Delivery, New York City."

Then the colonel handed the letter to Joe Phenix.

"It is miserably written, as you will notice, and some of the words are misspelled," the colonel continued.

"It was an easy job for you to make this ten dollars," the man-hunter observed, as he carefully examined the letter.

It was written on a piece of common yellow paper, such as drygoods stores use to wrap up their bundles, and the envelope was soiled and dirty, as though some one had handled it with unclean hands.

"Yes, I collared the ducats without any trouble. I sent the information by mail, as requested, and the next day a letter with a second five-dollar bill was put in my mail-box at the door of my office as the first one had been.

The writing was a rude "backhand" scrawl, but Phenix, upon a careful examination, was more inclined to think that the badness of the writing was due to a purpose to disguise the true hand of the writer rather than to the inability of the penman to write better.

"Well, as you observed, there isn't much information to be got out of this," Joe Phenix remarked.

"No, not much; but such as it is you are heartily welcome to it, sir," the private detective declared, in his grandiloquent way. "You can keep the document if it will be of any use to you."

"Much obliged."

"I make this offer to show you that I bear no malice for this little trick which you have played upon me," the colonel explained.

"Well, I will try and do as much for you some time."

Then Joe Phenix returned the weapons to the colonel and unlocked the door.

"I trust that you will keep this little misunderstanding a secret," the colonel said in an insinuating way, halting upon the threshold.

"Certainly, of course; you can rely that I shall never speak about the matter."

"I shall be very much obliged, sir, and if in the future I can ever do you a favor pray command me!" And then the colonel marched forth with the air of a man who owned half the city.

"Again baffled!" Joe Phenix exclaimed, gazing thoughtfully at the discolored letter. "It does not seem possible that I can get a clew

from this, but as a rule when a criminal puts pen to paper he makes a blunder."

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN THE BOWERY.

At ten o'clock at night the great east side thoroughfare of New York, known as the Bowery, is in the heights of its glory.

At that hour the main artery of the city, Broadway, is dark and deserted, with the exception of the upper part, where the theaters and hotels give life to the scene, but in the Bowery all the shops are open and the sidewalks are crowded with people.

One hears a dozen different languages and encounters men of as many nations.

The Bowery is the great cosmopolitan street of the metropolis.

In the lower part of the thoroughfare about every second store is a saloon and some of these bar-rooms are pretty hard places.

The countryman who goes to the Bowery to see the sights, and drops into one of these saloons to get a drink, if he is foolish enough to display a roll of bills, will be a lucky man if he succeeds in reaching the street without being robbed of his wealth.

The barkeeper "stands in" with the "gang" as the crowd of toughs who frequent the place are called.

The countryman will be quickly accosted by some one of the fellows who will pretend to have seen him before and he will be greeted in the most cordial manner, and he must be a cautious and particular man indeed who refuses to be on good terms with the obliging strangers whose salutation is so friendly.

More drinks will be called for and if the countryman partakes he is a lost man, for the drink will be what is called a "knocker out," that is the liquor will be drugged, and it does not matter either what the man calls for, from beer to whisky it is all one to the bartender. He can drug the glass no matter what kind of liquor is in it; even apparently innocent "soda" and ginger ale can be converted into a "knocker out" as well as the fluid which cheers and intoxicates.

Five minutes after the victim drinks the drugged liquor he is done for; his head swims, his senses reel and he is as helpless as though he had been on a spree for a week.

The gang are quick to improve the opportunity, and the way they "go through" the stranger, and relieve him of his valuables, is a caution.

Then he is carried out of the saloon and deposited in the nearest doorway, and the first policeman that comes along lugs him off to the station-house; the next morning the police justice, before whom he is brought, fines him about five dollars, and the countryman communicates with his friends for money to pay the fine, or if he is too ashamed to allow them to know what a fool he has made of himself, goes to jail for five days, and all the time he wonders how it could be possible for him to get so drunk in such a short time and upon so little liquor.

If the countryman gets the suspicion into his head that he has been drugged, and ventures to say as much, the idea is scoffed at, and the men to whom he tells the tale, whether it is the officials on the bench, or the police officers, laugh at him and suggest that New York liquor is a different article from that he has been used to taking at home.

The men in authority are averse to admitting that such saloons exist in the city, or that men can be drugged and robbed so easily, but the "rounders," who "know the ropes," can take you right to the places where this crooked work is carried on, and if you should ask one of them why the authorities do not put a stop to it, the man will smile significantly, and say: "Give me something easier, young fellow!"

One of the most notorious of these dens is situated on lower Bowery, a mean-looking saloon in a dilapidated wooden building, and well known as a house-of-call for fourth-rate boxers, many of whom are really professional crooks, and the lowest grade of sporting men.

Into this saloon, on the night of which I write, a stranger came.

There was the usual gang of hangers-on, congregated in the rear part of the saloon, seated at the tables which were there, watching a game of cards between two of their number.

The gang eagerly surveyed the new-comer when he made his appearance.

They had not got a chance at a "sucker" that night and they were hungry for prey.

Good judges of character were these fellows, and it only required a single glance at the stranger to satisfy them that he would not be likely to prove a victim.

He was no countryman, that was evident; your city rascal has as keen a scent for a stranger from the rural districts as a bird-dog has for his game, and, as a rule, they can pick out a countryman as far as they can see him.

The man was about the medium size, dressed in a well-worn suit of dark clothes, had on a soft hat, very much the worse for wear, and with his dark skin looked like a foreigner.

He wore his coat buttoned tightly to his chin, and from the fact that he had a dark handkerchief knotted around his throat, it looked as if linen was at a discount with him.

He fished out a nickel from his pocket and called for a glass of beer; after he drank it he sauntered to the rear part of the saloon, sat down at one of the tables and picked up one of the sporting papers.

"If the paper ain't in hand I will take a look at it," he said, speaking with a decided English accent to the undersized, bull-headed fellow who sat on the other side of the table.

"You are welcome to the blooming sheet for half of me," responded the man, who spoke with a still stronger English accent than the stranger.

"Why, the paper is two weeks old!" exclaimed the new-comer, with an air of disgust, as he looked at the date.

"Oh, say, you expect too blooming much!" the other retorted. "This ain't no reading-room, you know, but a bleeding gin-mill!"

"I was anxious to know if there was any chance for that nigger and Sullivan to have a go."

"You kin bet yer blooming life that the dark won't let the big feller git a crack at him as long as he can draw big money by giving shows!" the thick-set fellow remarked. "And I know what I am talking about, too, young feller, and don't you forget it; fer I am right in that biz—I'm a pug—I'm Mose's Mouse!" and he threw out his chest and cocked his chin up in the air, proudly, as he made the assertion.

Mose's Mouse was a well-known "feather-weight," who at one time bid fair to make an extra good man, but he could not let liquor alone, so could not be depended upon to get into condition, and his backers had abandoned him; he fell into disrepute, and the police, who knew him, asserted that he was more crook than pugilist.

"Well, I'm proud to meet yer. My name is Sheppard—Tom Sheppard, and I'm from 'Frisco, though I am an old New Yorker," and the stranger reached over the table and shook hands heartily with the pugilist.

"Say! will you have a beer?" Sheppard continued.

Mose's Mouse in a gracious manner signified that he didn't care if he did, so the liquid refreshments were ordered, but the stranger had to search all through his clothes before he found the ten-cent piece necessary to pay for the beers.

"I'm a little down on my luck," he confided to his companion. "I was run out of New York about ten years ago on account of getting into a little trouble. I got full one night and, by mistake, went into the wrong house. The bloke there kicked up a row, thinking I was going to rob. Seeing that he wouldn't listen to no explanation, I jest fetched him a lick over the head, but the women got to screaming jest then like a lot of wildcats, so I had to cut my lucky."

The Mouse grinned and indulged in a knowing wink.

"I twigs!" he exclaimed. "I have been in jest such a scrape as that myself."

"Well, I would have got out of the thing all right if a detective named Joe Phenix hadn't got arter me, but this blamed hound made the city so hot that I had to get out."

"I went west to the mines, and finally got to California, but I got into trouble there, too, so I drifted back to New York. I have been away so long that there isn't any danger of my being troubled 'bout the old affair, and then, working in the mines and on the plains as a cowboy has tanned me so that I am almost as black as a nigger, and it ain't likely that any of my old pals even would know me now."

"I have heerd tell of this Joe Phenix," the other remarked. "And they say that he is a tough cuss to git arter a man."

"Yes, and that reminds me I have struck a scheme with boodle in it if I can only work the game."

The Mouse was all attention.

"Say, is there any chance for me in the blooming thing? I'm fly if there is!"

"Mebbe so. When I come back I went to a crib where I used to hang out, kept by a woman whose husband is a regular High Toby cracksmen, but this Joe Phenix nailed him—caught him dead to rights and he's up to Sing Sing for twenty years."

"That is as bad as a life!" the other commented.

"I had to tell the woman who I was, but I wasn't afraid to do that, for I knew she would never go back on a man, and she proposed a job to me. She is jest crazy to git square with Joe Phenix, and she told me that if I could have him 'done up' she would stand a thousand, mebbe more."

The Mouse's eyes sparkled.

"Say, if I find you a man to do the job am I in on it?"

"Yes, I will divvy with you. Say you find a man to do the job for five hundred, then we kin collar two hundred and fifty apiece."

"She wants the detective to croak, of course?"

"Oh, yes, she wouldn't pay anything jest to have him hammered. He must be made a stiff of."

"I'm afraid that none of the boys will take

the job for five hundred, for this detective will be an ugly man to handle, and the risk is big you know."

"Well, if it costs a thousand we cannot probably get more than a hundred apiece out of it."

"That is worth catching, my tulip!" the Mouse declared. "I tell you what it is; you meet me here to-morrow night at ten, and I can tell you just how it can be worked."

Then the pugilist stood treat and the pair separated.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE THUG.

JUST as the hands on the clock in the saloon pointed to the hour of eleven, the dark-faced, shabbily-dressed young man who had said that his name was Tom Sheppard entered the "sporting drum" in the Bowery.

The place was well-filled with patrons, and at a table in the extreme end of the saloon sat the slugger, Mose's Mouse.

Sheppard ordered a couple of "beers" as he passed the bar and then he joined the Mouse at the table.

"Right up to time, I see, my tulip!" the slugger observed, as Sheppard took a seat at the table.

"Oh, yes, you will not find me late when there is any work on hand," the other responded.

Then the beer was brought and the two took a drink.

"Well, that is the hony way to do business," the Mouse remarked, wiping off his mouth with the back of his hand. "A man 'as got to be right up to the mark if he expects to get along."

"Did you try and see what you could do with that matter that we were chinning about last night?" the new-comer asked.

"Oh, yes, I kinder threw a few feelers out, but the job ain't a-going to be as easy as I thought it was."

"What is the trouble?"

"It is the man."

"Are the blokes afraid of him?"

"Right you are, me blooming youth!" the Mouse declared. "You know I told you last night that I thought I could put my hands on a half-a-dozen coves that would be glad to get onto a job like this 'ere one, but when I comes to talk to 'em, and the blooming blokes found out who the man was, none on 'em was anxious for the job."

"I know the man has a big reputation and I don't wonder that it scares the coves off, but many a chump has done for a fellow just as good as he is."

"That is all very well to talk, you know, but if they won't have it, where are you?"

"That is true, but there's big money in it for a man with nerve."

"That is so, and, mind you, I am just as anxious as the next man to collar some boodle, so as there was ducats in the thing for me I wasn't willing to take no for an answer, and I jest hunted round to see if I couldn't find some cove who was willing to take the job."

"That was right! A man must keep his eyes peeled now-a-days or he will get badly left!" Sheppard observed with the air of a philosopher.

"Finally I got on the track of a dago who had been spoken of to me by an old pal of mine as being a likely man to undertake any little job where big money could be made."

"An I-talian!" exclaimed Sheppard.

"Yes, a blooming Hitalian w'ot has the reputation of having killed more men in his hown country than he has got fingers and toes."

"That is just the kind of man to work a trick like this."

"Yes, you kin bet yer life on it!" the Mouse declared. "He was a brigand at home. One of the kind, you know, that lugs people off into the mountains and keeps 'em there until their folks ponies up a big lot of money for a ransom, and if the people are slow about giving up their wealth, why ducks of this kind jest slices off an ear or a bit of a man's finger and sends it in to the men who won't pony up so as to show 'em that there isn't any monkey business about the thing."

"Yes, I have heard of such games being worked."

"Well, you are safe in betting good money that this 'ere cove is jest the man to work games of that kind."

"What's his name?"

"Oh, it is one of them houtlandish Hitalian ones, nobody but one of his countrymen could twist their tongues around it," the Mouse replied. "I think any one would be safe in betting good money, too, that the name he goes by here ain't the one he was known by in his hown country. You see, he sliced off too many ears over there and finally had to cut his lucky; since he has been over here too he has been too handy with his knife; and one reason why he is willing to take this job—so I heered—is becos' he is anxious to raise money to get out West for fear he may git nabbed."

"Well, there is big money in it for him," Sheppard remarked.

"So I told him—Dago John is the name he generally goes by—and he se'd for me to bring you down to have a talk with him to-night."

"He can speak English then?"

"Oh, yes; he manages to patter pretty well," the Mouse replied. "Some of these dagos contrive to pick up the lingo in a very short time."

"Suppose we go for him!"

"All right."

The pair finished their beer and departed. "He lives in the Hitalian quarters down in Baxter street," the Mouse explained as they started down the Bowery.

"The Hitalians are a beastly lot of savages and they live in together like so many blaested pigs," the slugger continued.

In due course of time the "Bend" in Baxter street was reached, the head of the Italian quarters, and in one of the many low saloons which abound in the neighborhood the Italian brigand was found.

No one would ever have taken Dago John for a renowned warrior, for he was a little undersized, dried-up man, with a monkey-like face, the greater part of which was hidden by a short, jet-black beard.

He was dressed in coarse garments, and there wasn't anything in his appearance to indicate that he was anyway different from the many hundred Italian peasant, "hewers of wood and drawers of water," who have flocked to the New World.

He was treated with amazing deference by his companions though, and it was plainly to be seen that they regarded this ugly, mean-look little scoundrel in the light of a great man.

The Mouse introduced his companion.

"This is the gent as wants to talk a little business with you," he explained.

The Italian invited the pair to enter a little private room in the rear of the saloon, and when the three crossed the threshold the Italian carefully closed the door.

"Now we can-a talk, all right," Dago John remarked, speaking with only a slight accent.

"That is what we want," the Mouse observed.

"Did you explain to this gentleman what the job was?" Sheppard asked, addressing the slugger.

"Yes, yes, me know!" the Italian exclaimed. "Ze detective, Joe-a Phenix. He a great man! How mooch you giva me, eh?"

"Five hundred dollars," replied Sheppard.

"Oh, no," and the Italian shook his head in a very vehement manner. "He, Joe-a Phenix verra great mans! One tousand!"

"I don't think the party will be willing to give as much as that," Sheppard replied.

"Me no do it one cent-a less!" the brigand declared, emphatically.

"You can depend upon what Dago John says," the Mouse remarked at this point. "If he says a thing he will stick to it, and if he makes a bargain, you are safe in betting all you kin raise that he will carry it out."

"Yes, me a man-a of my word!" the Italian declared, proudly.

"I don't want to interfere—'tain't no concern of mine anyway, but I should think the job was cheap at a thousand, for this 'ere Joe Phenix is no slouch of a man, and the cove w'ot gives him his ticket for soup will have a hard trick to work."

"Well, I suppose I may strain a point and say a thousand," Sheppard remarked, after cogitating over the matter for a few moments. "I think my man will not grumble when he comes to consider what the job is."

"It is verra cheap-a!" the Italian declared.

"I know I would not take the job for five thousand!" the Mouse exclaimed. "No Joe Phenix in mine hif you please."

"How will you work the trick?" Sheppard inquired.

"Never you-a mind," replied the Italian, with a cunning smile. "I will taka care of dat."

"How can we arrange about the money?" Sheppard inquired.

"Better put it in the hands of Sheeney Mike, the old Jew, at the corner," the Mouse suggested.

"Mike is one of the biggest 'fences' in the city," the slugger explained. "His pawnbroking business is only a blind, and he is as square as they make 'em. Any of the gang will tell you that you can rely upon every word that the old Jew says."

"Yes, but this is really blood-money, you know," Sheppard remarked.

"Oh, you can arrange that easily enough," the Mouse observed, fertile in expedients. "There is no law in two gents making a bet upon the life or death of any particular man."

"That is true," Sheppard observed.

"Varra true!" the Italian declared.

"Suppose we go to Sheeney Mike and say to him that you and hour Hitalian friend 'ere has made a bet of a thousand dollars about Joe Phenix's life," the Mouse explained. "You think as how he will live, and the Hitalian don't, 'cos the lives of these 'ere detectives are mighty unsart'in. If he dies within the three months, the money is to be paid to hour friend 'ere; if he doesn't it is to be paid to you."

"Dat is varra fine, hey?" the Italian exclaimed.

"Yes, I think that scheme will work," Sheppard observed, thoughtfully.

"I think so, and the next thing on the pepergram is to see the old Jew so as to be sure that he will go into the game," the slugger remarked.

It was only a short walk to the pawnbroking establishment of Sheeney Mike, an aged Jew, who looked like the rascal that he was.

He demurred at first, for, as he explained, if any "accident" should happen to the detective, and the fact of the wager become public, it might get them all in trouble.

His qualms of conscience were easily settled, though, when Sheppard declared that no one but themselves would know anything about the matter, and he could take fifty dollars out of the thousand for his trouble.

And so the matter was settled, it being arranged that the money was to be brought to the Jew on the following day.

"You kin make up your mind that Joe Phenix is as good as dead and buried!" was the slugger's declaration, when he parted with Sheppard an hour later.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE VOICE IN THE NIGHT.

JOE PHENIX was an extremely patient man or else he would not have sharlowed the Wall street broker in the manner that he did, and knowing that Lemountain was on his guard, he was obliged to use more care than he had ever bestowed upon a thing of the kind.

Although he had very little to go upon yet he stuck to the idea he had formed.

He had had another interview with Vanderhausen and that gentleman was firm in the belief that it was Lemountain who had robbed his safe of the ten thousand dollars which young Jackson Von Heister had deposited with him.

The detective did not agree with the banker, but he was careful not to say so, until he had some proof to back up his opinion.

Joe Phenix had become interested in the case, one of the most puzzling that he had ever encountered during his professional career; his professional ambition was excited, and he had made up his mind to solve the mystery if it was possible, so, at his own expense, and without saying anything to the bank president, he had employed three of the best detectives that he knew to look into the record of Horace Lemountain, instructing them to use all possible care not to allow the broker to know, or even to suspect, that he and his records were under surveillance.

Joe Phenix had a very methodical way of going about a thing of this kind.

He kept a memorandum-book—a sort of a journal really—in which he entered important facts relating to the cases in hand.

To give the entries in this book will enable the reader to see just how the matter appeared to the man-hunter.

First came the murder case; there was no heading to the page but it commenced abruptly thus:

"1. Abram Rosengelt, killed, in Washington Square, small, round dagger, thrust to heart. Nothing taken apparently."

"2. Supposition \$5,000 or more in his breast pocket stolen. Killed for the money by some one who knew he had it—a supposed customer the decoy. Query? a woman? Doubtful! Not one woman out of a thousand would have the nerve. A man's trick—women don't work that way. Vailed woman's story; very odd; ought not to heed it, but work it for all it is worth. What does it mean anyway? How comes it that she knows me and takes an interest in the murder?"

"3. Vailed woman's tale seems to be corroborated by son's discovery that it was almost certain father had big money. More and more puzzling."

"Mem. Must find that woman. If she is crazy—no good. Maybe an accomplice of murderer—perhaps lost her wits by brooding over the crime."

"That theory must be worked."

"4. Safe case—is it connected with murder or not."

"5. Facts. L was on brink of ruin—gets money and pulls through—how? From safe? I doubt it! More likely the woman got money and gave it to him, or did the money come from dead Jew? Was she the decoy, knowing or unknowingly? She denies all knowledge—doubt her!"

And here the memorandums ended.

Patient as was the detective he was a little disappointed when, after a careful inquiry, his agents reported that they had not been able to gather a single fact of importance in regard to the broker.

But one thing encouraged the bloodhound.

"No news is good news! An extremely old saying," he mused to himself as he sat alone in his office after the secret agents left, reflecting over the reports which they had made.

"These fellows are keen and skillful men, no better shadows are there in the business, and I

flatter myself that I am pretty good in that line too, yet the best endeavors of all of us have failed to find how Lemountain managed to raise the money which kept him from being squeezed out of Wall street when he was caught in the cunning snare that Vanderhausen laid for him.

"If the money had come to him through any ordinary source there is no doubt that either some of those expert shadows, or myself, would have found it out."

"If any broker or banker friends had come to his assistance, checks would have betrayed the saving hands, but on that morning when the battle was fought, the bulk of his money was in cash, ten or fifteen thousand dollars, as near as I can make out."

"Now where did that money come from?"

The face of the detective became firm and hard and his eyes were fixed upon vacancy, gazing out of the window as he put the question.

"The money taken from the Jew and the sum stolen from the safe would just about make up the amount!" he exclaimed after a long pause.

"Can it be possible that the two crimes are as intimately connected as this would indicate?"

The detective meditated long and deeply over the question.

"It does not seem possible," he said at last.

"And is it not strange that my mind keeps coming back to the idea, although there is not a particle of evidence to support it—nothing but the vague words of the mysterious veiled woman."

"How strange it is, too, that she succeeded in eluding me," he continued. "She must be concealed in the house somewhere, but I will find her, and when I discover who and what she is I will be able to see just how much reliance I can place upon her words."

That night, as usual, the detective was on his watch at the Paragon Theater and shadowed the broker and the two dancing-girls to their house, then he went and took a seat in the Park with the idea that the veiled woman might favor him with a visit, but he was doomed to be disappointed this time for no woman came.

He remained in the Park until it was nearly one o'clock, then he gave up his vigil and sought his room.

It was not often that the detective allowed any business to bother him, but these two perplexing cases, which in some mysterious way his mind conceived were connected, would not down at his command, and after he undressed and got to bed, instead of going to sleep he fell to meditating upon the circumstances of the two cases.

It was a dark night, as there was no moon, and although the window curtain was up, the shadows in the room were so dense that not a single object could be distinguished.

"Come, come, this will not do!" Phenix muttered after he had lain awake for fully an hour, as he conjectured. "I must get to sleep or else I will not be worth anything to-morrow."

"I do not ever remember to have had my mind so exercised over such a thing," he continued. "This veiled woman business bothers me. One thing is certain. If I ever meet her again I will find out who she is, and whether she speaks by the card or not, if I have to go the trouble of placing her under arrest as a suspicious personage."

"Now I will sleep!"

And with firm resolution the detective closed his eyes.

Ten or fifteen minutes passed, and then, just as his ideas began to get hazy—just as slumber began to bind his senses with the chain of forgetfulness, a well-known voice sounded in the room.

"Are you asleep?"

Such was the question, and it was the veiled woman who spoke.

Joe Phenix sat bolt upright in the bed and began to rub his eyes.

Was it reality—had he indeed heard a voice, or was it but the illusion of a dream? Had he been asleep, and imagined that he was not?

He listened intently, and strove with his eyes to pierce the darkness, so as to make out if there was anybody in the room.

By this time his eyes had become so accustomed to the gloom that he felt sure he would be able to distinguish if there was anybody in the apartment, but, stare as he would, no figure met his eyes.

"Oh, it is very evident I was asleep and dreamed that some one spoke," he exclaimed aloud.

"No, it was no dream—it was I that spoke," the peculiar-toned female voice, so mechanical in its way, replied.

There was no doubt about the matter this time—it was neither a dream nor an illusion.

"Who are you that speaks?" the detective exclaimed.

"Do you not recognize my voice? I am the one who met you in the Park."

"Yes, yes, I thought I recognized the tones, but where are you?" and the detective peered around him as he put the question.

"Here, standing by your side; put out your hand and you will touch me."

Joe Phenix was astonished by this declaration, and he thought it very strange, if the woman was in the room, that he was not able to see her, and then, too, how had it been possible for her to gain admission, for, in addition to the key, there was a stout bolt upon the door, and Joe Phenix was positive that he had turned both the key in the lock and shot the bolt in its socket after he entered the apartment.

But he put out his hand as she said, and was not amazed to find that it touched only the empty air.

"I can neither see nor feel you," he replied.

"That is strange," said the hard, mechanical voice. "I will touch you, then you will know where I am."

The detective stared around him and waited for the touch of the veiled woman's hand, but it came not.

"I do not understand it," the voice declared, after a moment's pause. "There is some spell upon us. I am standing by your side—can see you as plainly as I ever saw anything in my life, and yet when I put out my hand to touch you, I cannot."

"Yes, it is very odd; where are you?"

"In your room, standing by your bedside."

"No you are not," the detective muttered under his breath. "But where the deuce you are is a puzzle."

Then, raising his voice, he said:

"If you are in my room, will you have the kindness to tell me how you got there?"

"I do not know," the voice replied, immediately.

"The door is locked and bolted!" then Phenix sprung nimbly out of bed, and moving with noiseless steps to the portal as he spoke, convinced himself that he had not made any mistake in regard to this matter.

The thought came to him that it was possible the speaker was in the entry without, so he quietly opened the door and looked.

The gas in the hall was burning dimly, so the entry was illuminated, but no one was in sight.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE WARNING.

MORE and more perplexed by this strange affair, the detective closed and bolted the door.

"It is very odd, if you are in the room, that I cannot find you," Joe Phenix observed, halting in the center of the apartment, listening intently for the voice to reply, so that he might locate the sound.

"I do not understand it myself, and the only conclusion to which I can come is that there is some spell upon us," the voice replied.

This was an amazing announcement for any one to make in the present age of enlightenment; and another strange thing was, that in the tones of the voice there was no wonder or any particular interest manifested.

It was more like the discourse of a cunningly-contrived machine, which some skillful mechanic had constructed to imitate the human voice, after the fashion of an organ, than the speech of a living, breathing woman.

The moment the speech began the detective concentrated all his attention upon it, so as to discover the direction from which it came.

In theory this is an easy thing to do; in practice, there is not one man out of a hundred whose ears are sufficiently well-trained to enable him to tell anything at all about such a matter.

It is only the experienced woodman, or the prairie hunter, the rival and oftentimes deadly foe of the savage red-skin, who can with justice boast that his ears are equally as well-trained as his eyes.

Now, though the detective was a man of keen observation, and his every sense was on the alert to detect from just what particular quarter the voice came, yet, when the speech ended, his judgment was at fault.

The speaker seemed to be standing within a few yards of him, and yet there was a cadence in the mechanical tones as though they came from a distance.

The science of acoustics is an extremely perplexing one, as many an architect has discovered to his cost.

Joe Phenix was acute enough to comprehend that there was some trick in this which he was not likely to solve by blindly groping in the dark, and so he stepped to the window, pulled down the curtain, and, striking a match, lit the gas, which he turned on full.

Like a flash the rays illuminated the apartment, and the detective looked around, not that he expected to see any one, for he had become satisfied that there wasn't any one in the room, but to discover, if possible, from whence the voice came."

Hardly had the rays of the gas driven away the shadows of the night when the mysterious voice again spoke.

"You have lit the gas?"

Joe Phenix was more and more amazed, not that the speaker should know that he had illuminated the room, for it was possible that by means of a peep-hole in one of the walls of the apartment the speaker could discover this fact, and then too the scratch of the match

would indicate what had occurred if his visitor was at all quick of apprehension, but that the unknown should take any notice of the fact.

"Yes, I have lit the gas, the detective replied.

"Turn it out, please, or I must begone. I cannot bear the light," the voice announced.

And now Joe Phenix took it into his head to play a trick upon the unknown, and he was desirous too of discovering whether the party could see that the gas had been lit, or guessed that it had been because she heard the scratch of the match.

"Very well, I did not know that it would make any difference to you; I will turn it out," he replied.

Then he turned the gas down for a moment and up again.

"There, we are in darkness now," he declared.

"Yes, that will do," the unknown replied.

This maneuver settled two things, first, that the speaker could not see into the room; second, that there wasn't anything supernatural about the business, for no spirit could be deceived in this easy way.

"Now, then, why have you put yourself in communication with me?" the detective asked.

"Because you are in danger."

"And you wish to warn me?"

"Yes."

"Well, I am very much obliged and I thank you."

"Do not thank me. I am but the helpless agent in the hands of a power whose influence I feel, but cannot explain."

"That is strange."

"Yes, I am impelled to warn you by an irresistible force which bears me around as the straw is hurried to the ocean by the raging mountain torrent."

Despite the nature of the declaration the mechanical coldness of the voice continued.

"There is a spell upon me and I must yield to it, despite myself, and therefore I come to warn you that you are threatened with a deadly danger, and you must be constantly on your guard or else your life will be the forfeit."

"Can you tell in what shape the danger comes?" the detective asked, anxious for further information, for a warning so vaguely worded could be of but little assistance to him.

"Yes, the danger that threatens you approaches in the shape of a swarthy-faced, undershaded man," the voice declared. "He looks like a foreigner, an Italian I should judge."

"And why does this man wish to harm me?" the detective asked, running over rapidly in his mind the list of men whom he had been instrumental in placing within the iron grip of the law, and who would naturally seek to be revenged upon him.

But as far as he could remember there wasn't any one of the criminals who answered to this description.

"Can you tell why this man wishes to execute vengeance upon me?" Joe Phenix asked.

"No, I cannot. All that I know about the matter is that some unseen power, whose will I am forced to obey, has told me to warn you that your life is in danger, and now that my task is performed, I must away."

"One moment!" the detective exclaimed.

"Can you not tell me who you are? My curiosity has been excited by your mysterious warning, and I should like to know who it is that has taken so much trouble to serve me."

"My lips are sealed—I cannot tell you; fare-well!" replied the voice.

"Stay a moment!" the detective exclaimed.

But there was no answer.

"Do you not hear me?"

No reply came, and Joe Phenix came to the conclusion that the mysterious unknown had indeed departed.

"Well, I have met with some strange adventures in my time, but this is about the oddest of them all," the detective muttered.

"Now, how in the name of all that is wonderful has this trick been worked," the man-hunter mused as he gazed around him, a perplexed look upon his face.

"Is there a speaking-tube somewhere in the wall, after the fashion of those in use in the modern style of flats?"

"If such a tube exists, that would explain this riddle immediately. That would solve the mystery of how she knew I had lighted the gas, and yet could not detect the deceit when I said I had turned it out, but had not done so."

"If there is a tube here anywhere, I ought to be able to find it."

The detective made these observations in a low tone, for he had a suspicion that though the unknown had not replied to his questions, yet she still might be on the watch to detect what he did.

So, as quietly as possible, Joe Phenix proceeded to search for the hidden speaking-tube.

Of course it stood to reason that if there was a tube, it had not been placed there for the especial use of the unknown.

Accident alone brought him to the house, and no one could have foreseen his visit in time to prepare anything of the sort, so that a trick might be played upon him.

If there was such a thing as a speaking-tube

in the room, it had been placed there long before he had any idea of coming to the house; had probably not been used for years, and in papering the room the mouth-piece might have been taken off, and the pipe covered up.

Acting on this idea, Joe Phenix carefully sounded all the walls of the apartment, but, despite his careful search, no trace could he find of any speaking-tube.

At last, in despair, he gave up the search.

"The tube exists—there is no doubt about that in my opinion," he murmured as he stood in the center of the apartment and looked around him. "But it is hidden away so cunningly that I am not able to find it."

"I will make another search to-morrow when I have the daylight to aid me and I may be more successful. Then, too, I will inquire of the landlady, although it is not probable that I will be able to get any satisfaction out of her, for if the tube is an old one, and has not been in use, the chances are great that she will not know anything about it. And then comes the question, how on earth did this mysterious woman discover that she could communicate with me by the means of this tube?"

"Ah! now we are touching on the bounds of what an ignorant world calls the supernatural, but which is nothing of the kind. The supposed spirits of earth and air have nothing to do with mind-reading, clairvoyance, and such unexplainable phenomena, which for want of a better title may be all classed under the head of animal magnetism."

"The unknown woman is a medium of unusual powers; she, in some mysterious way, has become interested in me, and this strange gift which she possesses has made it possible for her to devise ways and means to communicate with me, which an ordinary mortal would never have thought of using, just as somnambulists, walking in sleep, will proceed along the dizzy verge of a house-top, taking a path with perfect ease which in their normal condition would send them to certain death."

"But from whence came the information she possesses? Ah! there's the puzzle!"

"If this warning comes true—if my life is attempted, I will consult the Herr Professor and see if his wits, sharpened by his long experience in the clairvoyant business, can aid me to solve the riddle."

And after reaching this conclusion the detective turned down the gas, then went to bed.

His slumbers were not disturbed, and he slept soundly until morning.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE FRIEND WHO SPEAKS.

MRS. VANDERHAUSEN was out on a shopping tour, and as it was a beautiful day the whim had seized her to walk instead of using her carriage; then too she only intended to go to Fourteenth street.

She made her purchases and was on her way home when at the corner of Fourteenth street and Broadway she encountered one of her particular friends, Miss Vergie Van Rensselaer, an elder sister of the Bertie Van Rensselaer, at whose farewell dinner to his bachelor friends Von Heister had intrusted the ten thousand dollars to banker Vanderhausen's care, the mysterious disappearance of which was such a puzzle.

Mrs. Vanderhausen and Miss Van Rensselaer had grown up together, had been schoolmates, and nothing had ever occurred to interrupt the warm friendship which existed between them.

They greeted each other cordially and then Miss Van Rensselaer said:

"I am so glad that I have met you, dear! I have something very particular to say to you, and I had made up my mind to call on you—in fact, I have been thinking of calling for two or three days, but you know what a neglectful thing I am."

"I would have been delighted to have seen you, I am sure," Mrs. Vanderhausen replied, noticing as she spoke that there was a trace of embarrassment in the manner of the other, and wondering what caused it.

"Well, I have something very particular to say to you, and I do not really know how to say it!" Miss Van Rensselaer declared, with a light laugh.

"Put it in as few words as possible and get it off your mind," the other counseled.

"Yes, that would be best way, I know, yet it isn't always easy to do; but as I have commenced I will go on," Miss Van Rensselaer declared, with a resolute air.

"But we cannot talk here very well. Let us go and have a cup of chocolate and we can converse at our leisure."

"Very well, I will go, for you have excited my curiosity," Mrs. Vanderhausen observed.

Then the two repaired to a famous confectioner's who was much patronized by the women of fashion.

Refreshments were ordered—the pair had taken a table at the extreme end of the room where they could converse without danger of being overheard—and after they were served Miss Van Rensselaer began:

"Now, my dear Pauline, I am going to play the part of the kind, good-natured friend who

comes to you and says extremely disagreeable things, and does it all out of pure good nature."

"Yes, I understand," Mrs. Vanderhausen responded, with a smile.

"But you may rest assured that I wouldn't say a word about the matter if the subject didn't come right home to me, and I know that if I were situated as you are I should be glad to have some friend brave enough to be disagreeable!" Miss Van Rensselaer declared.

"I think I can guess the subject, for you, like myself, are a sister with a younger brother, to whom you have almost given a mother's care."

"Yes, it is about Horace."

"I suspected as much when you began to explain."

"I know just how you feel about him by the way that I always worried about Bertie until I got him safely married off my hands," Miss Van Rensselaer remarked. "Not that I mean to imply that either your brother or mine would do anything very wrong, but young men will be young men, you know, and very apt to do foolish things."

"Yes, that is true; their errors are more of the head than the heart."

"It is decidedly so in this case, although I don't doubt that if anything was said to Horace on the subject he would be very sure that his heart was concerned!" Miss Van Rensselaer declared, with a contemptuous lifting of her eyebrows.

"It is about a woman then?" and a shade came over Mrs. Vanderhausen's handsome face.

"Yes, and from all accounts a very dangerous one—one of the actresses at the Paragon Theater."

The shade upon Mrs. Vanderhausen's face deepened.

"An actress!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, and you know how dreadful it is for a young man to become infatuated with a woman of that kind!" the other remarked, with a face which fully expressed the horror she felt at such a calamity.

"Very true; but are you sure, dear, that the report is correct?" Mrs. Vanderhausen asked. "You know that there is always a lot of idle gossip about a young man like Horace, and it does not seem hardly probable to me that he would be weak enough to make a fool of himself with any of the women of the stage."

"Oh, the young men of to-day are so reckless!" Miss Van Rensselaer exclaimed. "But I will tell you all the particulars, and then you can judge for yourself."

"If you will be so kind," Mrs. Vanderhausen said, evidently very much worried over the matter.

She knew that her friend was no idle gossip, and understood that the report which had come to her knowledge must have appeared to have a good, substantial foundation, or else she would not have troubled herself to speak to her about the affair.

"Well, as it happens, this isn't any idle gossip, as you will see when I explain to you how it is that I chance to know anything about the matter," Miss Van Rensselaer explained. "Bertie is at home for a while, for Clara has gone out to Tuxedo on a visit. Well, last Saturday night I went to the opera, and then as my party stopped for a little supper after the performance, I did not get home until almost twelve, and Bertie arrived at just the same time. You know that since his marriage Bertie has been a very good boy; he was a little inclined to be fast before, but marriage made another man out of him; but on this particular night he had fallen in with a lot of his old chums, and had taken advantage of his wife's absence to have a good time, as he called it; in fact, dear, he had been drinking a great deal more than was good for him, and was just in the mood to tell all he knew. He always gets real silly when he drinks too much. I tried to get him off to bed, but he wouldn't go until he told me the good joke that the fellows, as he called them, had on your brother, and then he related how Horace had become infatuated with one of the Paragon Theater actresses, and how he, with the lot of the fellows, played the spy upon him."

"It seems that he goes to the theater every night, and after the performance is over waits for the girl and escorts her home, and they usually stop for supper on the way, and, in order to be near his charmer, Horace has taken a furnished room in the house where she lives, which is just across the way from your house, on the south side of Washington Square."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Mrs. Vanderhausen, looking decidedly annoyed.

"Yes, and I found out the name of the woman who keeps the house, so you can easily ascertain whether the story is true or not, although when I expressed a doubt, Bertie said it was so, for he and the rest followed Horace right to the house, and saw him open the door with a latch-key. The name is Garner, and the house is three or four doors from the corner. The name is on the door-plate, so you will not have any difficulty in finding the place."

"It seems incredible," Mrs. Vanderhausen observed, with a deeply troubled face. "But I presume the tale is true. I would not have believed that it was possible Horace could be so

weak as to fall a victim to the blandishments of one of these stage women."

"And where the joke of the thing comes in, as Bertie explained, and what amused him and his chums so much is the fact that the girl is not particularly handsome or fascinating; not the sort of a woman at all whom a man like Horace would be likely to make a fool of himself about," Miss Van Rensselaer remarked.

"It is a very distressing case," the other observed, with a sigh. "But it is my hope that the story is exaggerated; you know, dear, how young men do magnify such things sometimes."

"That is just exactly what I said to Bertie, but he protested that the story was all true," Miss Van Rensselaer replied.

"I know that I have made myself disagreeable by telling you this," she continued. "And it took me some time to make up my mind about the matter, but I finally came to the conclusion that you ought to know what was going on. I understand the way you feel toward Horace by my own feelings for Bertie, and if he had got into any scrape of this kind before his marriage I should have been glad if any one had taken the trouble to tell me."

"Yes, you are a true friend, Vergie, and I am very much obliged to you," Mrs. Vanderhausen declared, bestowing a warm clasp of the hand upon the other.

"You are not offended with me for telling you about this disagreeable affair?"

"Oh, no, quite the contrary! I hold to the belief that truth should always be spoken, particularly in a case like this, even if it is not pleasant."

"Yes, and now that you know how he has become entangled, perhaps you can devise some way to get him out of the scrape," Miss Van Rensselaer suggested.

"True, but I fear that it will be a difficult matter," Mrs. Vanderhausen observed, with a shake of the head. "You know how headstrong young men usually are in a case of this kind where a woman is concerned."

"Yes, yes, I know it, and it is really wonderful what influence a stage woman of this kind can exercise over a man; but you will have to measure your wits against her fascinations, dear, and perhaps you can succeed in getting the best of the struggle."

"Well, I can try at all events, and now let me thank you again, dear, for your kindly warning."

By this time the refreshments were finished and the two departed.

At the corner they separated with mutual good wishes.

The banker's wife proceeded slowly on her homeward path, her mind filled with gloomy anticipations.

"Is it on this woman that he has squandered all his money?" she murmured.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AN EXPLANATION.

As she walked along Mrs. Vanderhausen cogitated on a plan of action.

Being a resolute and determined woman, she had made up her mind that she would do her best to rescue her brother from the snares of the "painted stage creature," as she contemptuously termed the actress.

"The first thing is to see the woman, then I will know what she is like," she muttered to herself, as she went on. "I will go past the house so as to see where it is, and to-night I can put on a dark dress and a veil, thus disguising myself, and lay in wait to see her as she comes forth to go to the theater."

Acting on this idea, Mrs. Vanderhausen crossed Washington Square and went along the street that bounded it on the south.

The door-plate, bearing the name Garner, soon met her eyes, and after having thus located the house she went to her own abode.

She immediately consulted the morning newspaper and found that the performance at the Paragon Theater was advertised to commence at eight o'clock.

"Let me see," muttered the banker's wife, reflectively. "She will, probably, leave the house to go to the theater somewhere about seven, so that if I begin my watch at a quarter before seven I will be pretty sure to see her."

The banker dined at five, so there was ample time after dinner for her to prepare for the expedition.

At twenty minutes before seven she left the house, dressed plainly in dark garments, and carrying a veil to throw over her face.

Vanderhausen had gone to his club, so she had no difficulty in leaving the house without any one being the wiser for it.

She took up her station on the corner of the street, carefully adjusting the veil over her face.

Not long had she to wait, for at a few minutes to seven the two girls, Katherine Merrygold and Polly Percival, came down the steps of the lodging house.

There was a lamp-post on the corner which enabled the watcher to get a good view of the girls' faces as they passed.

The pair came slowly along, chatting, and

took no heed of the dark, veiled figure on the corner.

Mrs. Vanderhausen had no knowledge as to which one of the two it was who had caught the fancy of her brother, but the moment the two came in sight she guessed that it was the tall, dark-eyed girl, with the singularly white face, and the strange, peculiar look.

This supposition was deepened into certainty by a remark which she overheard coming from Miss Percival's lips as the two passed.

"I only wish I had such a devoted lover as this admirer of yours!" Polly exclaimed.

Mrs. Vanderhausen listened intently, but the other girl's reply was spoken in so low a tone that she could not catch it.

But with her hungry, hawk-like eyes glaring at the woman who she feared was going to be the ruin of her brother, she noticed that the expression upon the face of the girl did not change when the remark fell upon her ears, and this, she thought was a bad omen.

"There was no girlish blush upon her cheeks," Mrs. Vanderhausen muttered, as she gazed after the two. "None of the soft confusion which comes to the innocent maiden when she is rallied upon her love affairs. But this is evidently a woman of the world, although she looks young and girlish, yet, there is something hard and unnatural about her face."

"Ah me! If Horace has really become infatuated with this girl, I fear that he will pay dearly for it in the long run!" she declared, with a disconsolate shake of the head.

Her mission being ended, the purpose for which she came being accomplished, she returned to her home, and as she ascended the steps and opened the door with her latch-key, the very man who was in her thoughts came along, for when she turned to close the door she caught sight of him ascending the steps.

"Ah, Horace, I am glad you have come!" he exclaimed.

The gentleman was a little astonished at this greeting, as his sister was not wont to be demonstrative.

"Just in the nick of time, eh?" he remarked gayly, evidently in high spirits, as he hastened nimbly up the steps.

"Yes, I want to speak to you; come up stairs."

Mrs. Vanderhausen led the way to her private apartment, bade the gentleman be seated, then removed her street wrappings and took her accustomed place in the easy-chair.

"By the way, if I had met you in the street I would not have known you in this plain attire," the young man remarked.

"I do not doubt that; I assume it for a disguise."

"For a disguise?" and Lemountain looked surprised.

"Yes, for your sake I have descended to play the part of a spy!" Mrs. Vanderhausen declared, thus boldly taking the bull by the horns.

"For my sake?" exclaimed the young man more and more astonished.

"Yes, I suppose you do not understand it?" she queried.

"I certainly do not."

"A single question will open your eyes."

"Put it then as soon as possible, and do not leave me to burst in ignorance!" the broker exclaimed, assuming a gayety which he did not feel, for he knew his sister too well to suppose that any light matter would cause her to assume such a tone as this.

"Is it true that you are paying attentions to one of the actresses of the Paragon Theater?"

A grave look appeared on Lemountain's face and he seemed troubled.

"You will tell me the truth, I know," Mrs. Vanderhausen continued, perceiving that he hesitated to reply. "You will not descend to falsehood in this matter, I am sure."

"No, I will not," he answered, his face dark and gloomy. "If I felt inclined to quibble about the matter, I might protest that you ought not to put such a question to me; I might say that I am of age—my own master, and fully able to take care of myself. But you have been too good a sister for me to reply to you in any such way as that, so I will answer your question freely and frankly. I don't know how you came to know anything about this matter, but it is the truth."

"I saw the girl to-night. She is rather tall, slender, with dark eyes and hair, and a peculiar, pale face."

"Yes, you have described her correctly. Some kind fiend has taken the trouble to inform you in regard to this matter, I suppose," the young man remarked, his lip curling in contempt.

"Really, Horace, you ought to be aware that it would not be possible for a man like yourself to pay attention to one of these actresses without its giving rise to gossip," Mrs. Vanderhausen remarked.

"No, I suppose not; there are always plenty to play the spy and the informer in a case of this kind."

"Horace, you must not wonder that I am interested," the lady exclaimed. "You know that you have no truer friend in the world than I am, and I doubt if there is a creature living who would do as much for you as myself."

"Yes, Pauline, I am fully aware of that," he

remarked, his tone softening. "I appreciate to the utmost all that you have done for me, and so I am ready to talk to you freely about this affair, but I can assure you that I would not brook interference from any one else."

"Oh, Horace, believe me that it is nothing but a sincere interest in your welfare that has urged me to speak to you regarding this matter," Mrs. Vanderhausen declared, evidently deeply affected.

"Yes, yes, I know that, and although I will not deny that I am annoyed that the affair has come to your knowledge, yet I do not blame you for speaking to me about it, for, of course, I know how you feel in regard to the matter. Your apprehensions have been excited, and you are afraid that I am entangled in the net of a siren, who will drag me down to destruction."

"Yes, that is exactly what I think," Mrs. Vanderhausen declared. "Nor is it an idle fear, either, Horace. Some of our best men, both young and old, have been brought to disgrace and ruin by these stage-women—modern Harpies, who thrive upon the blood of their victims!"

"I understand you to say that you saw Miss Merrygold to-night—that is the name of the lady?"

"Yes, I was mean enough to descend to play the spy for your sake," the lady declared, bitterly.

"In such a case as this the end most certainly justifies the means," the young man replied.

"Well, what I was going to say was, did the lady strike you as being so fascinating a siren that a man like I am would be apt to make a fool of himself for her sake?"

"No, indeed," Mrs. Vanderhausen declared, scornfully. "Why, Horace, there are twenty girls in our set who are as beautiful as goddesses compared to this person, and then, too, they have both position and wealth, and a man like yourself ought not to wed a penniless bride, when he can just as well get a girl with plenty of money."

"That argument is a strong one, and I shall not attempt to dispute that it is correct," Lemountain observed.

"Miss Merrygold is certainly no beauty."

"No, indeed, and there is something about her face that I do not like at all," the lady declared.

"Then you do not think that she looks like a siren?"

"No indeed!"

"Nor is she one, and although she gets her living by dancing upon the stage—she is not really an actress, but a danseuse—yet she is a perfectly well-behaved girl and no taint of scandal has ever attached itself to her. She is strictly and severely virtuous, and I give you my word, Pauline, that though I am supposed to be her lover and do pay her the attentions which a woman usually accepts only from the man she fancies, yet I never kissed the girl in my life."

Mrs. Vanderhausen elevated her beautiful eyebrows in astonishment.

"Well, I am really surprised," she admitted. "Of course, I do not know much about girls of this kind, but I supposed that they were anything but prudes."

"Another strange fact. I never felt any inclination to kiss or caress the girl, although I pay her all the attentions of a devoted lover," Lemountain remarked, a strange expression upon his face.

"Why, this is certainly very odd, and I do not understand it at all."

"And I am about as much in the dark as you are," the young man observed in a gloomy way.

"I cannot explain why it is that I am attracted by her, but she has exerted this peculiar influence over me from the time that I first saw her face, when one night I happened to go to the Paragon Theater."

"The moment she came upon the stage I was attracted by her, and the desire to make her acquaintance immediately came to me, although there were plenty of girls on the stage far more fascinating in every way than she; and now that I know her—am accepted by her as a friend, it would puzzle me to tell you why I care to keep up her acquaintance. She is not beautiful, nor brilliant in any way, and always seems to be strangely reserved in my presence, just as if she was rather uncomfortable. In fact, her room-mate, Miss Percival, who always accompanies us, does most of the talking, for she is a bright, sunny-hearted English girl, full of chatter."

"This is certainly one of the strangest tales that I have ever heard," Mrs. Vanderhausen remarked, thoughtfully. "It seems as if the girl has cast a spell upon you."

"Yes, and I have cast a spell over her too," Lemountain observed. "For she says, and Miss Percival confirms the statement, that she can always tell whether I am in front of the theater or not, even though I am standing at the back of the auditorium where it is impossible for her to see me."

"How strange!"

"It seems to be true; and on my part, twenty times, since I have known the girl, have I come to the conclusion that I was making a fool of myself, and have resolved not to go near her

again, but when night comes and the hour approaches, coinciding with the one on which I first beheld her, there seems to be some subtle power which draws me to where she is."

"This is like a tale of enchantment!" Mrs. Vanderhausen declared, a serious look upon her face.

"I strive to fight against the feeling, and I often succeed in resisting the impulse; as to-night, I have made up my mind not to go near the theater, and, usually I get along pretty well until the time comes when I meet her after the performance, then the spell is generally too strong for me to resist, and I go."

"Do you suppose that the girl tries to make you come?" the lady asked, totally at a loss what to make of this strange affair.

"No, I do not believe that she does, for once in a while she appears to be really distressed when I make my appearance."

"The spiritualists now would declare that this girl was your affinity," the lady remarked in a thoughtful way.

"Yes, that idea has occurred to me, but you know I never believed in any such doctrines as that, and have always regarded the people who professed to think there was such a thing, as a lot of cracked-brained enthusiasts, but now, since I have encountered this girl, I am beginning to believe that there is something in the theory."

"Do you think that it would be possible for this influence to obtain such a hold upon you as to lead to your marrying this girl?" Mrs. Vanderhausen asked anxiously.

"No, I do not think there is the slightest danger of anything of that kind occurring," Lemountain replied. "The influence which draws me to her can certainly not be classed as a love spell, and, lately, it has acted upon me in such a way as to make me nervous."

"How strange all this is!" the sister declared, a look of bewilderment upon her handsome face.

"Yes, I cannot explain it, but I know the feeling is a deuced disagreeable one, and lately I have been troubled with extremely ugly dreams, and three or four times I have awakened abruptly to find myself covered with cold perspiration."

"What were the dreams?" Mrs. Vanderhausen asked. "I am not not inclined to be superstitious, you know, but the idea has often come to me that it might be possible that warnings do come to us in dreams, only we are not wise enough to understand and heed the admonition."

"Well, I can hardly explain what the dreams are, for every thing is dreadfully confused and mixed up. As nearly as I can remember, the general purport of the visions is that some one has taken away a part of my brains, and then in some mysterious manner, the brains are turned into a club which seems to threaten my life."

"It is a woman—apparently Miss Merrygold who appropriates part of my 'gray matter,' and the moment I attempt to pursue her for the purpose of capturing the stolen property she is transformed into a monstrous giant, and the brains resolve themselves into a club with which the monster proceeds to whack me in the most outrageous manner."

"Oh, how horrible!" the lady exclaimed with a shudder.

"Yes, and just about that time I wake up, and although I flatter myself that I am about as strong-minded as the average man of the day, yet when I wake from a dream of this kind I am all of a shiver."

"I do not doubt it! It fairly makes my blood run cold to hear you tell of the horrid thing!" the sister declared, nervously.

"Three times is the charm, you know, in all dreams of warning," Lemountain observed. "And I have certainly had this vision three times, if not four."

"As I said, I am not given to superstition, but I certainly believe that there is something in these dreams, and I should be very careful how I exposed myself to any danger."

"Oh, you can depend upon it that I shall be careful!" the young man replied.

"Now, sister, after this full and frank explanation, I hope that you are satisfied that I am not on the straight road to utter ruin because I know this girl."

"Oh, no, you have relieved my mind on that score, but I still have the apprehension that she is fated to bring trouble upon you," Mrs. Vanderhausen declared.

"Well, I am going to make an effort to break my chains and will take you to the opera to-night if you care to go."

"Oh, yes, gladly."

Half-an-hour later they were on their way.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A PERSISTENT CLIENT.

JOE PHENIX sat in his office.

It was on the morning which followed the night on which he had received the mysterious warning.

After dispatching the regular business which required his attention his mind reverted to the words of the veiled woman.

"It is the most mysterious thing which has

ever happened to me," he murmured. "And yet I do not believe that there is a man in the business who can boast of any more strange adventures than have fallen to my share.

"The trick was worked by means of some kind of a pipe in the wall, but it is mighty strange that with all my search I was not able to find it.

"The way the woman got into the house is not difficult of explanation. I can account for that all right, but the pipe puzzles me."

The detective had taken a look around before leaving the house that morning and he not only succeeded in satisfying himself as to how the girl of the mysterious warning had managed to gain access to the house, but he also solved the mystery of his not being able to trace her after she went through the garden wall.

It had been his idea that the fact of her existence was concealed by the people in the corner house, because her mind was affected and they did not wish the fact to become known that they harbored a lunatic.

But he had discovered that there was a grape-arbor in the yard of the corner house extending from the ground to the roof of the extension, which projected in the rear of the main house, and it would be an easy matter for any one to reach the roof of the extension by using the arbor as a ladder.

Then, as the extension was attached to a round dozen of the houses it would be no trouble to walk along the roofs until any particular house was reached, when an entrance into it could be made through a window.

By taking the extension roofs as a pathway, or else going along the roof-tops—they were flat—and coming through the scuttle the veiled woman had got into the lodging-house in order to deliver her warning.

The cunning of the insane is well-known, and a woman bereft of her senses can perform feats that would not be possible to her when possessed of her reason.

"I must look all through the block for this veiled woman," he cogitated. "Now that I have got a clew to the mystery, it will be only a question of time to hunt her down."

At this point the detective's meditations were interrupted by the entrance of his assistant, Tony Western.

"Here's a man wants to see you, Mr. Phenix, and though I don't think that his business is of any importance, yet he will not tell me what it is, but insists that he must have a talk with you," the assistant announced.

"I suppose the easiest way to get rid of him will be to see the fellow."

"Yes, I suppose so; he's one of those obstinate foreigners that you can't do anything with—an Italian."

"Ah, an Italian, eh?" and a peculiar look appeared in the eyes of the detective.

Quick to his memory had come the warning words of his mysterious monitor.

"Yes, an out and out dago."

"What kind of a looking man?"

"An undersized fellow with a short black beard, an ugly, sneaking-looking customer; one of the kind that you would be apt to give a wide berth to if you should happen to meet him in a lonely place on a dark night."

"A good specimen of the Italian brigand, eh?"

"Well, yes, I must say that the fellow does look like a regular cut-throat; but then the most of these low Italians are remarkable for their ugliness, so I suppose that it is not hardly fair to condemn them on account of their looks."

"There are a great many of them who are not any better than they ought to be," the detective observed. "It is a favorite trick with some of these petty foreign governments to dump all the paupers and criminals on our shores that they can induce to emigrate."

"Yes, a lot of worthless truck!"

"Well, you can show this fellow in and just leave the door open between the room and hall, and keep near it, so that if this man is up to any gum-game you will be close at hand," the detective remarked.

"I will fix the stop so that the door must remain open."

The stop consisted of a small iron bolt which when fitted into a hole in the floor interfered with the movement of the door so that it could not be closed.

The man who enters upon the career of a detective takes his life in his hands, and often desperate men will wantonly risk the throwing away of their own lives in order to be revenged upon the man who has brought them to justice.

"I can't place the man just at present," Joe Phenix remarked. "As it happens, I never have had much to do with any of these Italians, and I know of no reason why any of that race should have a grudge against me, but I received a warning yesterday to be on my guard against danger coming from a dark-faced foreigner, and this strange Italian making his appearance the first thing this morning seems odd, to say the least."

"Yes, it does, and if I were you I should keep my eyes open."

"Oh, he will not catch me napping," the de-

tective replied in his quiet way. "But run him in."

Tony Western obeyed the injunction, and after ushering the man into the presence of Joe Phenix, he dexterously dropped the bolt into its place, so that the door could not be closed.

The stranger was exactly as Western had described, an undersized, dark-faced, beetle-browed fellow, with glittering black eyes, which shone with an evil light.

He took off the greasy old cap which he wore pulled down over his forbidding brows, and made a servile bow.

"I want-a see Meester Phenix," he said.

"Phenix is my name."

"Ze detective?"

"Yes, that is my business."

"I am a varra poor man-a—work-a on de railroad; ze mans no pay-a me—want-a you catch-a mans!" the Italian explained.

"How much does the party owe you?" Joe Phenix inquired, his eyes fixed with an earnest gaze on the face of the other.

The Italian hesitated for a moment before he replied, then said:

"Forty dolla, maybe."

"His name?"

Again the Italian hesitated.

"Meester Smith-a."

"First name?" and the detective took out a memorandum-book and pencil as though he intended to make a note of the facts.

"Me-a don't know—Meester Smith-a, dat's all."

"What railroad?"

It was plain that these questions, so abruptly put, were bothering the man, but that might be because his command of the English language was so bad that he found it difficult to answer.

"Ze new-a railroad—New York to de Boston."

"And you have just come from working on that road?"

"Si, signor."

"Well, my dear sir, I cannot do anything for you," Joe Phenix remarked, putting up his book and pencil. "The case is too small for me to handle, and then it is not a detective that you want, but a justice, a magistrate, and you ought to make your complaint in the place where you worked; or if the man has come to the city, and you are sure of that fact, before some of the magistrates here."

"Si, signor—mooch obliged," and then the man bowed himself out.

Tony Western saw him safely into the hall, and then returned to his chief.

"Well, what do you think of him, sir?" he asked.

"It is a 'plant,' Tony."

"That is just my idea."

"He was totally unprepared for a cross-examination, for he did not expect to encounter anything of the kind, and when I took out my note-book and went into details, he was bothered."

"Oh, yes, he had his story about working on the railroad all right, but when it came to the particulars, he had to stop and think in order to concoct a lie."

"Yes, he had no anticipation of being questioned. His idea was that as soon as I discovered the nature of his business, I would tell him that I would not bother with any such case, and request him to get out."

"And if you hadn't a suspicion there was something wrong about the matter, that is exactly what you would have done," the assistant remarked.

"Yes, that is true; but I questioned the fellow because I felt sure I could catch him in a lie, and I wanted to satisfy myself about the matter. I thought I could trap him when I pinned him down to the exact railroad upon which he had been working. Upon the new line between New York and Boston there has not been a stroke of work done for the last six months, so that showed me that the fellow was a fraud."

"Yes, but what was his little game?" Western asked, reflectively.

"To make my acquaintance," the detective replied. "It is necessary for some purpose which he has in view for him to know exactly how Joe Phenix looks, so that if he encountered him in the street he would recognize him immediately, and you see he has worked the trick all right."

"Yes, but what is the purpose—why does he want to know you?"

"Ah, my dear Tony, now you are getting right at the heart of the matter," Joe Phenix replied, with one of his quiet smiles. "If you knew that, the chances are big that, you would know almost as much of the fellow's game as he knows himself."

"Yes, but I reckon you have made a guess at it!" the assistant declared.

"I reckon I have; guessing is the detective's best 'holt,' you know, and it is my opinion that this fellow is one of those miserable Italian cut-throats who have been run out of their own country on account of their crimes, and in this New World he is not at all averse to turning an honest penny by following the same trade that he pursued at home. I believe he has been

hired by some one to put a knife into me—the knife, you know, is the favorite weapon of men of his class—and as he was not personally acquainted with me, it was necessary that he should become so in order to do the job."

"I believe you are right!" the other declared.

"I think so, and now I propose to lay a little trap for this rascal."

CHAPTER XXX.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

TONY WESTERN chuckled and rubbed his hands together, gleefully.

"That is just the kind of game that had always ought to be played upon scoundrels of this kind," he declared.

"If I can succeed in catching him foul, I will be able to kill two birds with one stone, I think," Joe Phenix remarked. "First, I will have the satisfaction of beating the man at his own game; second, if I can get him in a trap, so that there isn't any chance for him to squeeze out, the odds are big that I will be able to make him squeal, and then I will learn who set him on to kill me."

As the man is a stranger to you, it is clear that it isn't any private grudge," Western observed.

"Oh, no, I do not think there is anything of that kind in this case. This fellow is one of the old-time bravos who is willing to sell his steel, provided he gets his price. Some one has hired him to murder me, and if I nail the Italian good and tight, the odds are great that I will be able to make him confess who the party is."

"That is very probable," the other remarked. "A fellow of this kind never has any scruples about betraying his pals, let alone an employer. If you get him in a tight place, the odds are big that he will be willing to make a clean breast of it if he thinks he can get out of the scrape by so doing."

"That is my calculation."

"But, I say! some one must have a big grudge against you to go to all the trouble of hiring a bravo to put you out of the way," Western observed, reflectively.

"Well, to my thinking, it is not exactly a grudge," Joe Phenix replied.

"What then?"

"It is my belief that it is only a carrying out of the old idea that the best way to stop a bloodhound when he is hot on the trail, and is getting dangerously near the object of the pursuit, is to kill the dog."

"Ah, yes, I see. I should not be surprised if you are right. But if you succeed in trapping the Italian, and then are able to get a confession out of him, it will be the worst move that the party could have made," Tony Western observed shrewdly.

"You are right, for it will give the game into my hands. The party who planned the scheme has made a false move, and it will be my own fault if I do not take such an advantage of the mistake as to lead to the capture of the schemer."

"You see, Tony, in a game of this kind the advantage is always with the criminal, and if he is wise enough to refrain from making false moves, it is almost impossible for the keenest detective to catch him."

"But there is mighty few of them who don't make a mistake of that kind," the assistant observed.

"That is where Providence comes in. It is not right that the guilty should escape punishment, and where the rascal and the man-hunter are evenly matched and circumstances favor the law-breaker, then, inspired by coward conscience, he makes mistakes, so that the bloodhound can get a chance to nail him."

This seemed to be reasonable to the assistant, and he said as much.

"Now, then, Tony, we must set our wits to work to guess what game this Italian will play, and we can prepare to beat it," the detective remarked.

"His first point was to find out what you looked like, and he succeeded in doing that."

"Yes, and now the next move in the game will be for him to watch me so as to discover my habits. Of course, if he was a bold and desperate fellow, one of the kind who did not care whether he lived or died, he could assault me here in the office, or the first time he met me in the street, but in either of these cases, although he might succeed in killing me, yet it would be at the risk of his own neck, for he would stand no chance of escaping, and from what I have seen of the man, I am of the opinion that he is not one of that kind at all. His mode of working is to steal up and strike a man in the back, and you can rest assured he will not make the attempt unless he thinks he stands an excellent chance of getting off."

"Yes, I think you are right; that is the notion that I got from the man's appearance," the other remarked. "In fact, from what I have seen of these Italians who are inclined to be crooked, there are mighty few of them who are not built on the sneak-thief order. The way they do business is to take their man unawares, slash him with a knife, then take to their heels and away as fast as possible."

"That is about the size of this fellow, I think."

Well, I think it is safe to conclude that there will not be any attempt to attack me on the street. His next move then will be to shadow me so as to find out where I live, and if he discovers that I am in the habit of going in and out after dark, he will argue that there will be a chance for him to get in his knife business—do his work and stand a good show of escaping."

"I reckon that you have figured it out about right."

"And our first move then will be to discover if this fellow is going to try to shadow me."

"I suppose that you will go about your business as usual if you have occasion to go out?"

"Yes, and you must follow me, keeping a good distance in the rear, and the odds are great that if the Italian attempts to shadow me you can detect it."

"Oh, yes, unless the dago is much more skillful at the game than I think he is," Tony Western remarked, with a confident air.

An hour later Joe Phenix was summoned to a broker's office in Wall street, and when he went forth, which he did by the main entrance, Tony Western hurried down by the side one.

As the reader will remember there were two entrances to the building in which the detective's office was situated.

By this means Western was able to reach the street without being seen by any one who was posted so as to watch the front entrance to the building.

The supposition that the Italian would attempt to shadow the detective was correct.

He had disguised himself by putting on another coat and a soft felt hat, which he wore so well pulled down over his eyes that it covered half his face; now, too, he had a peddler's kit of shoestrings, so that if he lingered long in one place his presence would not excite suspicion.

But the change that he had made in his apparel did not deceive the sharp-eyed Tony Western.

He had been with Joe Phenix for some time, and had picked up a good many points in the detective line from that great master of the art.

So, while the Italian tracked Joe Phenix, the detective's assistant tracked the "dago."

After his business with the broker was transacted, Joe Phenix returned to his office, the Italian tracking him with all the stanchness of a bloodhound.

Western entered by the side door, reaching the office a few minutes after the detective, and made his report.

"I spotted the fellow myself," the detective remarked. "And now, as there isn't any doubt that the fellow is after me, we must prepare a nice little trap for him."

The two held a consultation and soon the scheme was arranged.

"We must give him an opportunity to make an attack, and Washington Square is as good a place for the purpose as I know of in the city. I must contrive to fill up the time until about eleven o'clock, so as to make the rascal think that everything is favorable for his purpose."

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the time when Joe Phenix usually left the office, as business in the great down-town money district ceases about that hour, Western went out to make certain arrangements which the detective had decided upon.

Joe Phenix took advantage of his absence to prepare for the encounter with the Italian.

From his dressing-closet, which was always kept securely locked, and where a full assortment of disguises hung, he took a breastplate of Milan chain-armor, which was composed of small steel rings curiously joined together, and owing to the way it was constructed, it was perfectly flexible, and yielded to every motion of the body.

It was completely dagger-proof, and, in fact, the pistol would have to be a good one, and discharged at short range, which would send a ball through it.

Removing his outer garments, the detective put this on next to his undershirt, and then resumed the rest of his apparel, and when he was dressed there was nothing apparent to indicate that he was prepared for war.

"Now, my fine fellow, if your arm is strong enough to drive a knife through this shirt of mail, you would do to pose as a modern Samson in the dime museums."

Western soon returned and reported that the Italian was still on the watch.

"Well, we will take up his time until about eleven to-night, and then we will give him a chance for his money," Joe Phenix observed, grimly.

The two departed and took a Broadway car up-town.

With wonderful quickness the Italian put his shoestrings out of sight, and boarded the same car, getting on the front platform, from where he kept a wary eye upon the pair.

Both Joe Phenix and his assistant were careful not to allow the man to see that they had noticed him.

The pair rode up-town, got off in the neighborhood of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, and went to

the restaurant where Joe Phenix was in the habit of dining.

The Italian again got out his shoestrings and played peddler without.

It was dark by the time that the pair finished their meal, then they went to the office of the hotel, seated themselves by a window which looked out on Broadway, lighted their cigars, and smoked for an hour or so.

Phenix had been careful to select a position so the Italian could keep them in sight without any trouble.

It was not his game to bother the man and throw him off the track.

After the cigars were finished, the two sauntered up the street to the theater, Phenix entered, and Western went on up Broadway.

When he beheld the move, the Italian swore a few blood-curdling oaths quietly to himself.

He understood that he was in for a long wait—a couple of hours, perhaps longer—and he did not like the prospect, but since he had hung on so long in the pursuit he did not feel like giving it up, so he prepared to make himself as comfortable as possible.

It was half-past ten before Joe Phenix made his appearance, only a few minutes before the close of the performance.

He halted for a moment in front of the theater—looked up and down the street as though he expected to see some one, and this movement caused the Italian to swear again, for if the detective was joined by a companion, it was likely that he would have all his trouble for nothing.

But the Italian's fears in regard to a companion were not realized, for, after glancing around a moment, the detective lit a cigar and sauntered off down Broadway.

Five hundred feet in the rear came the Italian, his eyes glaring baleful fires.

CHAPTER XXXI.

A SURPRISE.

JOE PHENIX did not follow the line of Broadway, but went into the side street which a few blocks further down ran along the side of Washington Square.

After leaving Broadway Joe Phenix encountered few people in the street, and the Italian began to gradually get nearer to the detective, and when the latter came to one particularly dark block, the spy thrust his hand into his breast as if to clutch a knife; he had stowed away the shoestrings again in his pocket.

But if he intended to overtake and assault the detective, taking advantage of the darkness, the movement was frustrated by the appearance of a carriage whose peculiar maneuvers at first suggested that the driver was drunk, for he did not drive straight on, but halted every now and then, so that he kept a little in the rear of the two men.

The Italian now swore in his fluent and vigorous way at the coachman, being careful though not to allow the driver to hear him, for he had been long enough in New York to understand that the men who drive coaches are generally pretty hard citizens, well able to take care of themselves when it comes to a row, and as a rule they have an especial hatred for all Italians.

The spy after watching the coachman for a few minutes came to the conclusion that the man was not drunk, as he had at first imagined, but was in search of a particular house, for he noticed that when he pulled in his steeds in front of a house, he consulted a paper which he held in his hand, and then peered at the dwelling as though he was endeavoring to make out what was the number.

The presence of the carriage, though, interfered with the carrying out of the plan which the Italian had formed, and it was not until Joe Phenix reached Washington Square that the carriage came to a complete halt.

The detective did not keep on by the side of the Park but turned into it and took the path leading directly through the center.

A fierce chuckle came from the lips of the Italian as he noticed this movement, and then he glanced around to see what had become of the carriage.

It was motionless before a house two doors from the corner.

The driver at last had evidently found the place of which he was in search.

"Aha, I shall not be troubled by him any more!" the Italian exclaimed in accents of satisfaction, speaking in his native tongue. "And now if I cannot get a chance to use my knife when my prey gets in the shadows of the trees I am not so good a man as I am believed to be."

"Peste! it is but a single slash and death will come so quickly that this great American will never know what struck him. He will fall as though the lightning had seared his brain!"

Your true Italian brigand is always inclined to be grandiloquent.

The spy was fully prepared for his mission, being in dark clothes and having shod himself with rubbers so as to be able to steal with noiseless steps upon his victim.

Joe Phenix strode on with careless steps, never looking to the right or left, but puffing away at

his cigar as though totally unconscious of danger.

In reality though, when he turned into the Park he had cast a rapid glance out of the corner of his eyes which enabled him to note the exact position of the Italian, and now as he got into the shadow of the trees every sense was on the alert to detect the approach of the stealthy foe whom he knew to be creeping upon him with murderous intent.

All was favorable for the purpose of the assassin. The Park was deserted; none of the policemen were near the spot.

The Italian, with the cautious tread of the wild beast stealing upon its prey, got within a couple of yards of Joe Phenix and then with a sudden bound, sprung forward and aimed a terrific blow at his back.

The quick ears of the detective had warned him of the attack the second before it was made, and he too sprung forward, so that the knife which the Italian brigand intended to drive to the very hilt in his back, would only have inflicted a flesh wound a couple of inches deep if it had not been stopped by the coat of mail which the detective wore; as it was, the moment the steel encountered the armor the blade was shattered in twain.

A fierce Italian oath came from the lips of the astonished bravo, but he had no time for aught else—no movement could he make, for Joe Phenix wheeled around with wonderful quickness for so big a man and with a short, loaded club, which he had concealed in his right hand—a weapon like the one so famed by English burglars and known as a "life-preserver" dealt the Italian a blow on the head which caused him to see more stars than he had ever before beheld in his life.

Up went the hands of the brigand—too late to ward off the blow, and then, with a groan, down he went all in a heap.

The sound of the Italian's fall and his groan attracted the attention of two of the park policemen and they came in haste to the spot.

When they arrived they found the detective bending over the prostrate man, just snapping a pair of handcuffs upon him.

As it happened, both the policemen knew the detective, and they uttered exclamations of surprise as they recognized him.

"This is a case of the biter bit, boys," the detective observed in his grim way. "This dago picked me out for a victim, but he wasn't quite quick enough on his pins and I laid him out with a tap on the head, and now that I have got the bracelets upon him, the chances are good that he will put in some time up the river."

The idea that any footpad should attempt to make a victim out of a man like Joe Phenix struck the policemen as being an extremely good joke and they laughed heartily at it.

"By the way, boys, just hail that carriage passing and I'll see if I can't hire it to convey my prisoner, for I have given the man such a rap on the head that I have an idea that he will not feel like walking for the next hour or two."

The carriage to which the detective referred was the same one that had been loafing along the street to the Italian's disgust.

One of the men ran to hail the carriage while the other assisted the detective to transport his prisoner to the curb.

The coachman readily agreed to take the pair, and no wonder, for the driver was Tony Western in disguise.

The policemen helped the detective put the unconscious dago into the carriage and then Joe Phenix thanked them for their trouble, got into the carriage, and away he went.

The helpless man had been bundled into the bottom of the carriage, and as the detective gazed upon the unconscious ruffian a grim smile came over his stern features.

"The scheme worked better than I expected," he mused. "I thought I would have more trouble in capturing this black-muzzled ruffian, and now that I have got him, the next thing is to make him talk, and whether that will be difficult or not depends upon the amount of pluck he possesses."

CHAPTER XXXII.

IN THE TRAP.

THE carriage proceeded directly to Broadway, and after reaching that thoroughfare it turned to the left and went up-town instead of proceeding to the prison where the captive ought to have been conveyed.

On it went, straight up Broadway to the Boulevard, and still kept on in its northward course.

At the end of an hour it had left the built-up portion of the city well behind, and about this time the brigand recovered his senses.

First he gazed in a stupid way around him, as if he did not exactly know what to make of it, and then his eyes fell upon the calm face of Joe Phenix looking placidly upon him.

At the same time he became conscious that his hands were fettered and then, immediately, he realized what had happened.

With an effort he rose and sat on the seat, surveying the detective with an expression,

which, if eyes had been daggers and glances could kill, would have made short work of the man-hunter.

After gazing at the detective for a few moments and grating his teeth fiercely together, he uttered a string of fierce Italian oaths, winding up by cursing himself, the detective, and the world in general to an extremely hot and uncomfortable place, if there is any truth in the usual belief.

"Don't swear, you will not catch any fish," observed the detective in his grave way.

The brigand looked astonished, for he did not comprehend the joke.

"Feeh! to Satan wiz de feesh!" he cried, angrily. "I no want-a feesh. *Cospetto!* I will-a have your blood for dis!"

"Oh, no, not at all; I have not got any to spare," was Joe Phenix's calm rejoinder.

Then the Italian happened to glance out of the carriage window, and as the moon was coming up, he was enabled to see that the carriage was rolling along what seemed to be a country road.

His astonishment was great.

He comprehended that his plan had failed, he had been captured by the man whom he had tried to kill; the manacles were on his wrists, he was a prisoner with a very sore head, due to the violent blow which his captor had given him; he should be now on his way to a jail, but instead of that he had apparently been carried out of the city into the country; what did it mean?

At first he felt so indignant and humiliated by the crushing defeat he had sustained, that he resolved not to inquire, but curiosity got the better of him at last, and so he said:

"Where you a-take me, eh?"

"Don't bother your head about that; you will know when you get there, maybe," was the detective's ambiguous reply.

And this provoked a fresh explosion of oaths. Joe Phenix produced his billy and held it up in warning.

"Stop your bad language, or I will give you another tap with this plaything and lay you out again!"

The Italian glared ferociously at the detective, but there was a look upon Joe Phenix's stern face which seemed to say that he would be as good as his word, so the Italian subsided.

Five minutes later the carriage left the road and turned into a narrow lane. At the end of the lane was an old-fashioned stone-house, its windows guarded with the massive shutters common to a bygone age.

There was no signs of life about the house and it seemed to be deserted.

There was an old shed in the rear of the house, and the coachman drove the carriage under the shed, got down from the box, fastened the horses and then came and opened the door of the carriage.

"Get out!" commanded the detective.

The Italian obeyed.

Then he got a look at the coachman and immediately recognized in him the man who had been examining the numbers in the street, and whose presence had kept him from attacking his prey.

And now for the first time it flashed upon him that he had been caught in a cunningly devised trap, and again he grated his teeth in anger.

This conviction was confirmed when the coachman stepped out into the moonlight and he saw that it was no regular driver, but the man who had admitted him into the detective's office that morning.

And now his rage was so great at finding he had been trapped so easily that he could no longer find relief in swearing; all he could do was to grate his teeth and vow that he would one day have the heart's blood of both these men to avenge this discomfiture.

"Follow this man!" said the detective, as Western lit a lantern and advanced toward the house.

The Italian obeyed, and Joe Phenix brought up the rear.

Western unlocked a rear door and entered the building, the brigand and the detective followed, and after Joe Phenix passed the portal he gave the heavy door a push with his hand and it closed with a sharp snap, being fastened by a spring lock.

A slight shiver quivered the frame of the brigand as the clang of the closing door fell upon his ears, and somehow the damp, unwholesome smell of the old house, and gloomy clang of the door seemed to suggest to him that he was within the dark, damp walls of a tomb.

A feeling of dread apprehension seized upon him.

What was the meaning of this proceeding? Why had he been brought to this desolate place? What did his captors intend to do with him?

Ten steps in the entry and Western opened a door and then began to descend, as if to a cellar, for a great gust of damp air poured up when the door was opened and smote the three in the face.

The soul of the Italian revolted against proceeding further.

"What is de meaning of dis?" he cried. "Why you no take me-a to de jail? I will not-a go a step-a!"

"Go on, or I will throw you from the top to the bottom!" cried Joe Phenix, sternly, and to give due emphasis to the threat he grasped the Italian by the collar of his coat and gave him a shake, the brigand being as helpless in his grasp as a rat in the teeth of a terrier.

Down the slippery old stone steps the three went, and the cellar door, too, closed after them with a clang which rung loud and clear through the old house, and made the Italians feel still more uncomfortable.

The cellar was a dark and dismal place, and as the men advanced into it, the rays of the lantern making a hole in the gloom, some monstrous rats scampered away, evidently not used to being disturbed, and decidedly more scared by the rays of the light than by the presence of the humans.

The cellar was a bare, empty vault, excepting that in the center of it stood a peculiar, old-fashioned chair; it had a high back and arms and was framed in Gothic style.

Such a chair as one sees upon the stage of the theater when a king is represented upon his throne.

In front of the great chair, and a couple of yards from it were two stools.

"Now your examination is about to begin," said Joe Phenix, conducting the astonished Italian to the chair of state. "Sit down."

"I no-a understand," exclaimed the brigand.

"Do not worry yourself, you will understand all in good time," the detective replied. "Sit down, I say!"

The Italian complied, but no sooner had he taken his seat in the chair than he was made a close prisoner.

His weight upon the seat set in motion concealed mechanism; steel bands sprung forth and gripped his legs and arms so that he was unable to move.

"Oh, saints in heaven! what does this mean?" the Italian yelled, in great alarm.

"I told you that your examination was about to begin," Joe Phenix remarked. "And this little proceeding is to put you in the proper frame of mind to answer the questions which are going to be asked."

CHAPTER XXXIII. THE EXAMINATION.

THE Italian glared around him for a moment, pale with rage and terror, for these mysterious proceedings had struck a secret dread to his soul.

"Taka me-a to de jail—I will not-a speak here!" he cried.

"Well, we will see about that. I give you fair warning, though, that if you do not speak you will be put through a course of sprouts that will be apt to astonish your weak nerves!" Joe Phenix declared, with stern accents.

"I have brought you here rather than to a jail because I want you to tell me certain things, and it is my opinion that I can get you to speak much more readily by the course of treatment that I shall pursue than if I took you to a jail and relied upon the regular authorities to get the truth out of you."

"Me-a no speak!" cried the prisoner, assuming a fierce look and shaking his head doggedly.

"Now don't you be too certain about that," the detective replied. "You have not heard my explanation yet, and don't know what is in store for you if you will not give me the information that I desire."

Restlessly the evil, black eyes of the prisoner wandered from side to side, as though seeking some avenue of escape.

"Now, in the first place, I will tell you what I want to know; then, if you do not feel inclined to gratify my curiosity, I will tell you how I propose to make you speak."

"When I getta out of dis I will kill-a you!" the Italian threatened.

"I am not so sure that you will ever get out," the detective retorted. "Most certainly if you do not do as I want you to, you will be apt to stay right here—that is, your bones will."

The brigand gasped as though he was troubled by shortness of breath, and his swarthy face became visibly paler; although he strove to put on a bold front, the threat had struck terror to his soul.

"Now, the information I require is this," the detective continued. "I want the name of the man who hired you to kill me."

"No, no—"said the Italian, but the detective interrupted him immediately.

"It is no use for you to try and lie out of the scrape!" Joe Phenix exclaimed. "I know as well that you made a bargain with some one to kill me as though I was present and a witness to the transaction."

"I want the name of that man, and his name I will have or else you will suffer!"

The brigand's head drooped upon his chest and he reflected for a moment upon the situation.

"S'pose I tell-a you what-a I know—you leave-a me-a go?"

"Well, I am not making any bargains just now," the detective replied. "And you do not

seem to consider that you are not in a condition to do much in that line.

"Now, my advice to you would be to make a clean breast of it and throw yourself upon my mercy. I can tell you that you will stand a much better chance than by attempting to hold out and make conditions."

"Do-a your wu'st! I spit at you!" howled the Italian in a wild transport of rage.

"Oh, no, you will not spit at me—you will spit at the rats," Phenix retorted.

The brigand stared as though he did not understand.

"I see you do not comprehend, and I shall have to explain," the detective continued. "You saw the rats scamper away when we came into the cellar, and fine, fat fellows they are too. I doubt if in all big New York you can find greater monsters in the rat line than these sleek, gray-coated rascals."

"This is their stamping-ground, you know; here they are at home, and they regard us as intruders, and I fancy that if it were not for the light, these rodents would come forth and give us battle."

"Well, we propose to take the light away and leave you and the rats to settle the question as to who has the best right to the cellar."

The breath of the Italian came thick and hard; great drops of perspiration came out on his forehead and his face became ghastly pale.

Joe Phenix continued, as cold and merciless as a judge delivering a sentence to a condemned criminal.

"And in order to attract the rats we have some cheese which we are going to scatter about your chair, and after they have whet their appetites on the cheese they will probably commence on you, and when we return to-morrow if we find anything here but your bones I shall be very much astonished."

A hoarse sound came from the lips of the Italian, more like the growl of a caged beast than an exclamation from a human.

"Get out your cheese!" commanded the detective.

Western obeyed, and, breaking it in pieces, scattered them around the chair.

The brigand watched this proceeding with eyes that seemed to be almost starting from their sockets.

When Western finished he took up his lantern again, and then proceeded to ascend the staircase.

"If you decide to confess before the rats devour you, call out, for I will be within hearing!" Phenix said, pausing at the foot of the stairs.

The Italian endured the torture until they were half-way up the stairs, and then, as the rats began to come forth from their hiding-places, attracted by the smell of the cheese, he became almost frantic with terror.

"Coma back—me-a tell-a you!" he shrieked.

The pair returned and again the rats fled, though this time with greater reluctance than before.

All the obstinacy of the brigand was gone and he made a full confession.

Joe Phenix shook his head; he was satisfied that the Italian had told the truth and yet he was not much nearer his object than before.

The Italian was removed from the cellar to the carriage, and the party drove back to the city, where the Italian was safely lodged in jail, although, completely broken down, he begged most piteously to be released, but the detective was deaf to the appeal.

"It is very likely," he said to Western, "that when his capture becomes known, and his name and description appear in the newspapers, it will be found that he is wanted for crimes even more serious than the one with which he now stands charged."

And this proved to be the case, for the Italian turned out to be a Neapolitan brigand with a dozen murders on his head.

The Italian Government claimed him and he was sent across the water and there publicly executed.

Before he slept that night Joe Phenix pondered for quite a while over the new development in the case.

"The party, whoever it may be, is playing the game in an extremely skillful manner, and the way the track is covered is worthy of the greatest praise.

"The old pawnbroker will not be able to give me any information, for beyond the fact of the bet, he knows nothing, but I will haul him over the coals the first chance I get as a warning that the next time a thing of this kind comes to his notice it will pay him to put me on my guard."

And, in passing, we will remark that the detective kept his vow in regard to the old Jew and in less than a month had him up for receiving stolen property, and it cost the old man over a thousand dollars to get out of the scrape, and from that time forth no inducement could make him commit such an error again.

"This Sheppard is the party, an agent, of course, but he must know the principal," was Joe Phenix's conclusion.

"Through the Mouse I may be able to get at Sheppard, and through Sheppard to the man I am so anxious to nail."

"I will see to that to-morrow."

And when the morrow came Joe Phenix was as good as his word.

Mose's Mouse was easily found, and he weakened and told all he knew when the detective got after him, but he could not tell anything definite about Sheppard, nor could Joe Phenix, after an exhaustive search, discover any trace of him.

"Can it be possible that Sheppard is the principal in disguise?" the detective mused.

"Upon my word I believe that is the truth. I am getting hotter and hotter in the search!"

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE PROFESSOR AS AN EXPERT.

HER PROFESSOR RODOLPHE VON STEIN, as he delighted to call himself, sat in his cozy parlor, reading an evening newspaper.

The clock upon the mantel showed that the hour of nine had come.

The madam had had a busy day with clients, anxious to look into the future, and, feeling tired after her work, had gone to bed.

Few visitors came after nine, and so there was no likelihood of any fees being missed, a proceeding which would have deeply grieved the thrifty soul of the exponent of the mystic science of clairvoyance.

The door-bell rung; the servant had been allowed to go out, and so the professor answered the summons in person.

He found a dark-faced stranger at the door, a man neatly dressed, with glossy black hair, which coiled in tiny ringlets, almost as tightly as the kinks of a negro's wool, and a generally foreign appearance.

"Pardon," said the stranger, bowing with the politeness so common to the Latin races, "have I the honor of addressing Professor Von Stein?"

"You have, sir; what can I have the pleasure of doing for you?" replied the professor, very favorably impressed by the manner of the other.

"Allow me to have the honor of introducing myself," said the stranger, with another bow. "I am a Cuban; my name is Francisco Vasques. During the past few years I have made quite a study of the phenomena of mesmerism, and seeing by the daily journals that you are one of the leading experts in that line, I thought I would like to get your views on the subject."

"Well, it is rather late, and my wife, Madam Von Stein, who gives the manifestations, has retired for the night," the professor explained. "If you will come to-morrow, she will be pleased to make plain to you the extent to which we have developed the science."

"You misunderstood me, professor!" the stranger declared with another bow. "It is not a seance that I seek, but simply an exchange of views with yourself on the subject. I have given the matter much thought and study, but I must confess there are some things about the matter which puzzle me completely."

"Ah, yes, I see, and I fancy there are few men who have given the matter much attention who will not be obliged to make the same confession, but have the kindness to walk in, sir, and I will give you all the information in my power."

"I shall be greatly obliged if you will be so kind!" the stranger exclaimed, with another one of the polite bows.

The professor conducted the stranger into the parlor, invited him to be seated, and then resumed his own chair.

"You were so successful in your contest with the doctor who doubted your powers, that I have been led to believe that you are possessed of unusual abilities."

This contest had been reported at length in the public prints.

"A doctor in the neighborhood, jealous of the reputation that the clairvoyants were making, had declared that it was all a humbug, and offered to give the doctor a hundred dollar bill if he could succeed in telling the number of it, the bill sealed up in an envelope in the doctor's pocket.

The trial was made in a public hall, and the professor successfully accomplished the feat, much to the disgust of the doctor.

"Ah, yes, I did succeed in showing that scoffer that there was more in mind-reading than he thought!" the professor exclaimed with a chuckle of delight.

"Well, I was satisfied from this test as well as from the remarks that you made on the subject, as reported in the daily journals, that you were a man who had made an exhaustive study of the subject."

"I have given it my best attention for a great number of years," the other declared. "It is a fascinating subject, so abstruse, so difficult of comprehension; not like a regular subject which can be mastered by dry details; there is so little known and so much unknown."

"Yes, I understand; and I suppose the fact that it is so has been the attraction for me. Now, I have become so interested in the subject, that I have thought of writing a book about it. Not a history or a treatise, for I am not master enough of the science to do that, but a sort of a novel, wherein clairvoyance will play a prominent part."

"Yes, yes, I see!" exclaimed the professor,

very much interested. "Well, I should think that it would be a capital idea, and if you handle the matter rightly, it would be extremely interesting."

"I am glad to hear you say so, for I consider that your opinion is of weight."

The professor bowed at the compliment.

"I have just got the skeleton of the story roughly in my mind, you understand?"

"Yes, yes."

"The main idea was to base the story upon a crime. I haven't exactly decided what kind of a crime, you know."

"That is immaterial, of course; it may be robbery, or murder, or anything, in fact."

"Yes; well, the party who commits the crime—we'll say that it is a middle-aged man—the cashier of a bank, maybe, who plunders the institution, and does it in such a cunning way that it is not possible for any one to tell who got the money. The crime was committed secretly, and no one knows anything about it but himself. This man, by the way, I will represent as being of a nervous, peculiar nature; what a mesmerizer would call a good subject."

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed the professor, rubbing his palms together, greatly interested.

"A great friend of this cashier is another man, a great deal like himself, nervous and peculiar, a good subject, also. The interest which unites these two is an odd one; one seems to miss the other, just as if there was some spell which bound them together."

"Yes, a beautiful idea! and if you handle it well it will create a sensation. The two have what spiritualists term an affinity for each other. Nature intended that they should be one, but by some mistake they were created two."

"That is the idea, but here is my puzzle," the Cuban observed. "At the end I want to have the crime discovered and brought home to the guilty man, and my idea was to have the other one betray him; unconsciously, perhaps. But now, is it really within the bounds of possibility?"

"Not a doubt of it!" the professor declared in a decided manner. "Two men, situated as these two are, whom you have described, would be as the written letter and the page of the copybook! What one man knows the other would know; he would absorb the knowledge unconsciously from him, just as the page of the book is not conscious of receiving the impress of the letter; the brain becomes a machine—a plate, so to speak, whereon is engraven the knowledge derived from contact with the other force."

"Of course I cannot make my meaning as clear as I would like," the professor explained, "because it is a subject which seems to be hidden by a veil. We mortals may take a sly peep now and then, but we cannot tear the curtain away so as to fully understand the working of the mystic thing."

"But is it possible that this second party could impart the knowledge which he has received from the first party in regard to the crime to any one?" the Cuban asked, doubtfully.

"Most certainly!"

"You must remember that he does not know that he possesses the knowledge."

"There is where clairvoyance comes in!" the professor declared. "A clairvoyant could extract that knowledge from him just as easily as the blank paper takes the impression from the types, and, under certain conditions," continued the professor in a reflective way, "it might be possible for the possessor of the secret—the innocent possessor—to betray his knowledge. He might talk in his sleep, and then tell the story which had been transferred from the tablets of the other man's brain to his own—tell it, mind you, without being conscious of what he was doing, and when he awoke, he would know no more about the affair than if he had had no part in it."

"It is a very incomprehensible thing!" the Cuban declared with a grave shake of the head.

"It is indeed; it is a science the bounds of which no man knoweth!"

"But certain things seem to be facts."

"Yes, indeed!"

"A man who knows a secret can communicate that secret to another man with whom he is *en rapport*, without knowing that he has done so, and the second man can receive the information without being conscious of it?"

"To my thinking there is no more doubt about the matter than there is about the solar system!" the professor declared, emphatically. "You will observe that there isn't any spiritualism—nothing appertaining to the supernatural about this matter. It is related to the same invisible telegraphy which when we stub our toe immediately communicates the fact to our understanding."

"Yes, I comprehend; first there must be certain conditions—two minds, the one responsive to the other."

"True, and then some one with wit enough to make the unconscious holder of the secret reveal the knowledge which he is not aware he possesses."

"Well, I am very much obliged, professor, for your kindness," said the visitor, rising. "I had this idea in my mind but it was not defined clearly, but now I think I fully understand it,

and I have no doubt I will make a success out of my story."

Then he drew out his pocketbook, but the professor declined to accept a fee.

"Bless my soul! just for a little friendly talk, oh, no!"

With many thanks the gentleman took his departure, and as he descended the steps he muttered to himself.

"Some one with wit enough to make the holder of the secret speak," he said. "Is there danger of that? Yes, yes! It is the unexpected that always happens," and then he disappeared in the gloom of the night.

The professor was much elated over the interview.

"Now, if that skeptic, Joe Phenix, had been present I think even he would be willing to admit, 'there are more things in Heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy, Horatio,'" the disciple of Mesmer exclaimed.

The bell summoned the professor to the door.

The tall form of the detective, Joe Phenix, met his eyes as he unclosed the portal.

"Aha, you are the very man I want to see!" he said. "Come in and let me astonish you."

"I wish to be informed as well as astonished," the detective remarked, as he entered.

CHAPTER XXXV.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION.

THE professor conducted the detective to the parlor and installed him in the chair which the stranger had occupied a few minutes before.

"You are in search of information, eh?" the host asked.

"Yes."

"And you think that the high priest of clairvoyance can give it to you?"

"That is what I have come to find out. You ought to be able to do so if any man can."

"My dear Mr. Phenix, you can rely that I will do everything in my power for you!" the professor declared.

"You know that I am a little skeptical in regard to the claims put forward by the men and women who claim to be expert clairvoyants."

"Yes, yes, I am aware of that."

"Now it is the custom for some of them to make extravagant claims."

"Very true, and, my dear Mr. Phenix, allow me to say that, as a rule, the greater the claims made by the party the bigger the chance that the individual is a fraud!" the professor asserted.

"I think you are right as to that; such has been my experience."

"They make up by bluster and brag what they lack in experience and knowledge. In fact, I am not putting it a bit too strongly when I say that almost nine clairvoyants out of every ten, particularly the ones who advertise, are rank humbugs of the worst kind."

"Well, as you are in the business you ought to know," Joe Phenix remarked with a quiet smile.

"Now, I am honest with you, you know, and I am willing to admit that even the madam, who is as good a clairvoyant as I ever saw, cannot do what two-thirds of her visitors expect her to accomplish, but neither she nor myself practice any deception upon them; it is not necessary, for they deceive themselves."

"A frank confession is good for the soul," the detective observed.

"Oh, I can afford to be open and above-board with a man like yourself," the professor declared.

"But there are so many of these humbugs around, chiefly women of uncertain age, who have made the discovery that to pretend to be clairvoyants is an easy way of making money, that I have been strongly tempted to follow the example of ole clothes men, and put out a sign, 'This is the original Jacobs; don't go elsewhere to be robbed, but come right in here. No connection with the other swindler across the way!'" and the professor laughed heartily at his joke.

"If you should put out such a sign you would find that there would be plenty of idiots whom it would not keep from patronizing you."

"That is true, I believe. This country is no better than the England of which Carlyle wrote: 'Population thirty-three million, chiefly fools.'"

"Now here is a point. Can your wife perform the feat which so many clairvoyants accomplish in so easy a manner?"

"My wife can do anything that any other clairvoyant can do!" the professor declared, emphatically, interrupting the other.

"Hear me out," Joe Phenix remarked. "Your wife goes into the clairvoyant state. I say to her I want you to put your mind on a certain party and tell me what he is doing—"

"Hold on, you have not got it right!" interrupted the other. "It is necessary, you know, to have a lock of hair of the party."

"Oh, yes, I forgot that important fact," the detective observed, a tone of sarcasm in his manner. "Well, I place the lock of hair in her hand, which, I presume, brings her *en rapport* with the party; can she then follow that man's movements and tell me what he is doing?"

"Humph! I think you have been reading Dumas's novel where Joseph Balsamo works that little trick, and a dozen other authors, thinking the idea a strong one, have worked it over."

"You are not answering my question. Can she do it?"

"No, she cannot nor anybody else!" the professor replied. "You see I can afford to be honest with you. No one can do it! Why, my dear fellow, if such a thing were possible no criminal in the world would escape the avenging arm of the law. By calling in the aid of a clairvoyant the fugitive could be tracked at once. It goes without saying. If you were an ordinary man now, I would not admit this, but I would give some jargon about that the Lord did not mean that mortals should pry into the future to such an extent as to interfere with the decree of fate and a lot of rubbish of that sort to cover up the truth, and that is, the thing can't be done."

"I know that I have tried all the noted ones and not one succeeded in telling me anything that I did not know before. They dealt with the past, hesitated at the present and failed utterly when they came to the future," the detective remarked.

"All science has a limit you know," the other replied.

"True, and now here is something which I wish your opinion upon. Suppose a man commits a crime; no one knows of that crime except himself, the knowledge is securely locked in his own bosom—"

"If he consulted my wife she could relate to him all the particulars of the crime just as accurately as though she had witnessed the deed!" the professor interrupted.

"Yes, I know that; a true clairvoyant can accomplish that feat, but that is not the point I seek to reach," the detective replied.

"Would it be possible for that man to meet another party who could receive from his mind the particulars of the crime, without being conscious of it, and without the man himself knowing of the fact, so that if the second party was brought before a clairvoyant, the medium could give all the details of the crime, drawing it from him?"

The professor could not refrain from a vigorous expression of astonishment.

"Upon my life!" he cried, "this is one of the strangest things that ever came under my notice!"

"How so? What do you mean?"

"Why, there was a Cuban gentleman who called upon me this evening—he left about ten minutes before you came—and his business with me was to ask the identical question which you have just put."

Despite his coolness the blood of the detective leaped with unwonted quickness in his veins for a few moments.

Had he been so near the game he sought?

He asked the professor to give him all the particulars and the latter gladly did so.

Joe Phenix was at once struck with the resemblance that this Cuban bore to the mysterious Sheppard for whom he had so vainly sought.

In this case the man appeared to be a gentleman, and wore good clothes; in the other he took the character of a low thief, and dressed accordingly.

"I reckon that this man who called upon you is the man that I am after," the detective observed.

"Now that I tell you that it is probable the man was disguised, do you recollect anything suspicious about his appearance?"

"I declare you have succeeded in completely astonishing me!" the professor exclaimed. "I must admit that this man, with his cock-and-bull story about the novel that he intended to write, fooled me completely, and I never even dreamed that there was anything wrong about him. I swallowed his yarn as easily as though I had been the greenest countryman in existence. But now that you have excited my suspicions I can recall that there was something odd about his hair. I noticed it at the time, but I supposed that his hair looked strangely because he was a foreigner."

"He wore a wig, evidently, and no matter how well a wig is made it never looks like a man's own hair, and always appears odd."

"Oh, a light breaks in upon me now!" the professor declared. "The fellow got an idea into his head that he had, without knowing it, betrayed the secret of his crime, and he was anxious to learn if such a thing was possible."

"And you assured him that it was?"

"I did, most decidedly!"

"He will be on the anxious seat now," the detective said, thoughtfully.

"Does he know that you are after him?"

"Yes, and that I have struck the right track, too," the detective replied. "The man is a bold and daring rascal, one of the greatest that I have ever encountered; a man of superior abilities; necessity tempted him into crime, and it has been no easy job for me to get upon his track, and if I had not been especially favored in such a way as to warrant the belief that fate itself had stepped into the lists, I could not have possibly done anything."

"Well, I am not what the world would call a religious man," the professor observed, in a

thoughtful way. "But I must say it surely does seem very often in this life as if there can be no doubt that there is a Just Creator who is not willing that the innocent should suffer and the guilty escape punishment."

"It is most certainly so in this case," Joe Phenix declared. "As far as the wit of man could avail, this cunning mortal covered up his crime completely, and had it not been for this unknown and incomprehensible power by means of which a man's secrets can be possessed by another and yet neither one of them be conscious that such a thing has taken place, I would not have been able to get on his track. In some way though the man has got an inkling of the truth. There was an article in one of the morning newspapers yesterday, an exposure of the clairvoyants it was called, evidently written by a man who had made a close study of the phenomena, and he admitted that it seemed to be a fact that in some incomprehensible way it appeared to be possible for facts to be transmitted from brain to brain without the owners' being aware of the fact, or being able to stop it in any way, and this idea suggests an explanation of certain mysterious circumstances which had occurred to me lately."

"It is probable too that the man himself read the article and his alarm being excited, caused him to visit me," the other observed.

"Undoubtedly! He knows that I am on the scent, for he hired a ruffian to murder me. The attempt failed and I caged his man. He will probably learn that fact to-morrow, and then his alarm will become greater."

"My dear fellow, you must not lose any time!" the professor declared. "If you know the party who, you think, is the unconscious possessor of the secret give me a chance to bring on a trance, and if you do not become the master of all the particulars of the crime, then I will give you leave to say there isn't anything in clairvoyance, and that it is a fraud from beginning to end!"

"I will have the party here to-morrow if it is possible for man to accomplish the purpose!" the detective declared, and then he took his departure.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

LEARNING THE TRUTH.

THE next morning Joe Phenix, in company with the chief of police, called upon the manager of the Paragon Theater and had an interview with him.

The detective desired the assistance of the manager, and in order to oblige the chief, who was an old friend of the theater man, the latter willingly consented to do all he could for the bloodhound.

Miss Merrygold was summoned from the stage, where she was rehearsing, the detective was introduced to her, and he explained that he had been informed by a clairvoyant who had seen her on the stage that it was his opinion she possessed wonderful powers as a medium, and as he—the detective—had a case on hand which bothered him, it had been suggested that if he could get Miss Merrygold to go into a trance for him, some important information might be obtained.

The girl did not seem to be in the least surprised by this extremely novel proposal, but received it as though it was a common every-day matter.

The manager put in a few timely words when the detective finished, saying what a noted man Joe Phenix was in his line, and that he should regard it as a personal favor if the girl could bring herself to comply with the request.

"Oh; I am quite willing to aid you if I can," the dancing-girl replied. "I have been often told that I would make a good subject, but have never felt as if I should be contented to make the trial until now."

"I shall esteem it as a great favor if you will consent to try the experiment," the detective remarked.

"Oh, yes, I will do so gladly, for I think that it may do me good," Miss Merrygold answered. "For the past week I have been greatly troubled by bad dreams, and it really has seemed as if there was a weight on my mind, just as if I was brooding over something, and that is not so, for I have not had any trouble. And what worries me more than anything else is that I am afraid that I have been walking in my sleep. Twice lately have I awoke in the morning and found myself all completely dressed for the street, even to my hat, and I had gone to the trouble of wrapping a dark veil around my head. I am not sure, of course, that I really left my room, but it is certain that I got up and dressed in my sleep, without being aware of what I was doing."

The reader by this time, no doubt, has guessed that Joe Phenix had satisfied himself that the mysterious veiled woman who had given him the strange warning was the dancing-girl.

He had solved the mystery of the communication which had been made to him in the still hours of the night.

In the center of the ceiling of his room he had discovered a gas pipe to which a chandelier had once been attached, and this pipe he traced to the room above, occupied by the two girls,

where it ended in the wall by their washstand; it was an unused branch, cut off from the rest of the gas fixtures, and in some mysterious way the somnambulist—for such he was satisfied the girl was—had discovered that by means of this pipe she could communicate with him.

Instead of being affected in her mind his mysterious monitor was walking in her sleep.

Miss Merrygold said she would like to have Miss Percival go with her, and so both the ladies were excused from further attendance at the rehearsals.

Joe Phenix escorted the pair to the house of the professor, and that gentleman received them in the most cordial manner.

He was as fully interested as the detective in the experiment, for he considered that the science in which he was so much interested was on trial.

After he had taken a good look at Miss Merrygold, and exchanging a few words with her, he took occasion to tell the detective, while the ladies were removing their cloaks and hats, that he believed the lady would prove to be as good a subject as he had ever experimented upon.

When the dancing-girl announced that she was ready, the room was darkened, and the professor proceeded to bring on the magnetic sleep.

It was an easy matter to throw the girl into a trance, and when she was fast in the unnatural condition, the professor said:

"You had better put the questions, Mr. Phenix, for you know exactly what you want," and he placed a chair in front of the girl as he spoke. "Sit here, take both her hands in yours, and bring all your will force to bear."

Joe Phenix obeyed the injunctions.

"Can you tell me what I wish to know?" he asked.

"Yes, I think so," the girl replied, her voice strange and unnatural.

"Go back to the night of October tenth; a man is crossing Washington Square—an old man—a Jew."

"Yes, I see him."

"In the middle of the Square he encounters—"

"A figure dressed like a woman."

"She speaks to the Jew?"

"Yes."

"What says she?"

"In low tremulous tones, 'I was afraid to have you come to the house, so I brought the diamonds to you.' Then thrusts her hand under her long cloak, draws out a slender knife and strikes it to the heart of the old man. He falls upon a bench, she bends over him and takes a roll of money from the inner breast pocket of his coat, then walks rapidly away."

"Follow her."

"She leaves the Park and goes to a house on the street facing the Park."

"Is there a name on the door of this house?"

"Yes; it is Vanderhausen."

"Does the woman enter?"

"Yes—no, she goes to the basement door under the high stoop, as though she intended to go into the house, but when concealed from observation, the long cloak, hat and veil is removed and a man stands revealed. He rolls the things up in a bundle and then departs. At the corner of the street it is rather dark, he drops the bundle then hides in a doorway. A ragged man comes along, seizes the bundle and hurries away with it."

"Fix your mind upon the slender knife with which the murder was committed. Can you do it?"

"I can."

"Where is the knife now?"

"In a secret desk-drawer in a room that looks like an office. There is a pair of cuffs with the dagger—there are spots upon them. It is blood."

"Go to the door of that office."

"I am there."

"Give me the number?"

"Forty."

"Look across the way on the next corner."

"Yes."

"There is a large building there, with a sign in gold letters on the window."

"Yes."

"Read it."

"Grand Central National Bank."

"Fix your mind on the man who committed the murder."

"Yes."

"Follow him!"

"Follow him! I will it!" cried the professor at this point, making a series of magnetic passes with his hands before the face of the girl.

"Oh, you are tearing my soul from my body!" she moaned, then gave a convulsive gasp and sunk backward in a dead faint.

Miss Percival sprung to her assistance, while the professor hurried for restoratives.

"I am afraid we have kept her on the rack too long!" he exclaimed, with a glance at the clock. "You know what time we commenced, and it is just twelve now."

"Yes, we will not attempt to proceed further," the detective observed. "And you notice, professor, that when we come to a certain point we stop."

"All things must have an end, you know," the other replied.

The girl was soon restored, the professor

Joe Phenix's Shadow.

waked her from her trance, and the detective thanked her for her assistance.

"I feel quite weak and sick," she said, "but still much better than I did. It is as if a weight had been lifted from my mind."

The ladies departed; Joe Phenix took a carriage, drove to the Tombs, swore out some warrants, and then continued on to the money district.

He got out of the carriage in front of the Grand Central National Bank, and as he did so encountered Vanderhausen.

"Ah, Mr. Phenix, I have got rid of that fellow at last!" the bank president exclaimed gleefully. "He was the man that robbed the safe, no doubt, but he has got into more difficulties, and last night I made a bargain with him for ten thousand dollars to leave the country and never return!"

Man of ice though he was, the detective had hard work to suppress an angry exclamation.

"I presume you are speaking of your brother-in-law, Mr. Horace Lemountain?" the detective said.

"Yes, he sailed by the Brazilian steamer at five o'clock this morning."

Gone to Brazil, the country with which the United States has no extradition treaty, and with so many hours' start there was no chance of overtaking him.

The detective was disgusted, but he kept his feeling to himself, proceeded to Lemountain's office, introduced himself to Briggs, and showed his search-warrant.

The partner knew nothing of the secret drawer, but the detective soon discovered it and possessed himself of the slender dagger, a mere toy, more for ornament than use, a relic of the Dark Ages, and the blood-spotted cuffs.

Briggs was amazed when informed that his late partner was suspected of having committed a murder.

"Well, he had pluck enough to do it, and he was dreadfully hard pushed for money," he admitted.

Then, in order to satisfy himself Joe Phenix called upon Mrs. Vanderhausen, and he told her plainly that he had discovered she had dealings with the diamond-broker, and also informed her that he was satisfied that it was she who robbed her husband's safe.

The lady, thinking the detective knew a great deal more than he did, admitted the truth.

Her brother had casually mentioned to her that the old Jew lent money on diamonds, and she caught eagerly at the chance to help him. She visited the Jew in his office and made an arrangement for him to call and lend her five thousand dollars on her diamonds. This was a cunning trick on Lemountain's part to decoy the Jew to the lonely Park with money on his person, then, taking advantage of the likeness he bore to his sister, dressed himself like a woman, accosted the old man, and so got the chance to kill him.

While waiting for the Jew the banker's wife found the keys which her husband had dropped, and knowing the money was in the safe, helped herself to it, so had no need to call upon the Jew.

Thanks to his mysterious monitor, Joe Phenix had unraveled the tangled skein, but the murderer had escaped.

Escaped human laws to fall a victim to divine justice.

The pilot boat which took the pilot from the Brazilian steamer brought back the body of the fugitive.

In his state-room, by some careless handling of his revolver, the weapon was discharged, and he had been instantly killed. The tragedy had taken place a minute or so before twelve o'clock —about the same moment that the girl had fainted in the clairvoyant's office.

A coincidence, perhaps, but the professor would not have it so, and declared:

"No, no! there is more in clairvoyance than the world either knows or suspects!"

THE END.

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